The CHAMPAGNE STANDARD

By
Mrs John Lane

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The Champagne Standard

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BY

MRS. JOHN LANE

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TO THE PUBLISHER
MY GENIAL AND
SUGGESTIVE CRITIC

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My Preface

I WAS sitting alone with a lead-pencil, having a *tête-à-tête* with a sheet of paper. A brisk fire burned on the hearth, and through the beating of the rain against the little, curved Georgian windows I could hear the monotonous roll of the sea at the foot of the narrow street, and the tear and crunching of the pebbles down the shingle as the waves receded.

I had been ordered to write a preface to explain the liberty I had taken in making miscellaneous observations about two great nations, and then putting a climax to my effrontery by having them printed. So here I was trying, with the aid of a lead-pencil and a sheet of paper, to construct a preface, and that without the ghost of an idea how to begin. Nor was the dim electric light illuminating; nor, in the narrow street, the nasal invocation of an aged man with a green shade over his eyes,

arm in arm with an aged woman keenly alive to pennies, somewhere out of whose interiors there emanated a song to the words, "Glowry, glowry, hallaluh!"

In fact, all the ideas that did occur to me were miles away from a preface. It was maddening! I even demanded that the ocean should stop making such a horrid noise, if only for five minutes. And that set me idly to thinking what would happen to the world if the tides should really be struck motionless even for that short space of time. The idea is so out of my line that it is quite at the service of any distressed romancer, dashed with science, who, also, may be nibbling his pencil.

I sat steeped in that profound melancholy familiar to authors who are required to say something and who have nothing to say. Finally, in a despair which is familiar to such as have seen the first act of *Faust*, I invoked that Supernatural Power who comes with a red light and bestows inspiration.

"If you'll only help me to begin," I cried, "I'll do the rest!" For I realised in what active demand his services must be.

My Preface

I didn't believe anything would happen. Nothing ever does except in the first act of *Faust*, and I must really take this opportunity to beg Faust not to unbutton his old age so obviously. Still, that again has nothing to do with my preface!

I reclined on a red plush couch before the fire and thought gloomily of Faust's buttons, and how the supernatural never comes to one's aid these material days, when my eyes, following the elegant outlines of the couch, strayed to a red plush chair at its foot, strangely and supernaturally out of place. And how can I describe my amazement and terror when I saw on that red plush chair a big black cat, with his tail neatly curled about his toes! A strange black cat where no cat had ever been seen before! He stared at me, and I stared at him. Was he the Rapid Reply of that Supernatural Power I had so rashly invoked? At the mere thought I turned cold.

"Are you a message 'from the night's Plutonian shore'?" I said, trembling, "or do you belong to the landlady?"

His reply was merely to blink, and indeed

he was so black and the background was so black that but for his blink I shouldn't have known he was there.

"If," I murmured, "he recognises quotations from *The Raven*, it will be a sign that he is going to stay forever." Whereupon I declaimed all the shivery bits of that immortal poem, which I had received as a Christmas present.

He was so far from being agitated that before I had finished he had settled down in a cosy heap, with his fore-paws tucked under his black shirt front, and was fast asleep, delivering himself of the emotional purr of a tea kettle in full operation. For a moment I was appalled. Was this new and stodgy edition of *The Raven* going to stay forever?

"'Get thee back into the tempest and the night's Plutonian shore,'" I urged, but all he did was to open one lazy eye, and wink. For a moment I was frozen with horror. Was I doomed to live forever in the society of a strange black cat, of possibly supernatural antecedents?

"'Take thy form from off my door,'" I was about to address him, but paused, for,

strictly speaking, he was not on my door. And just as I was quite faint with apprehension, common-sense, which does not usually come to the aid of ladies in distress, came to mine. Like a flash it came to me that even if he stayed forever, *I* needn't. I had only taken the lodgings by the week. He was foiled.

With a new sense of security I again studied him, and I observed a subtle change. He was evidently a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde kind of cat. I became conscious of a complex personality. Though to the careless observer he might appear to be only a chubby cat, full of purr, to me he was rapidly developing into something more; in fact, mind was, as usual, triumphing over matter, and presto! before I knew what he was about, he had changed into an idea.

"To call you only a cat!" I cried in fervent gratitude. "Only a cat, indeed! You are much more than a cat — you are a miracle! You are a preface!" And so, indeed, he was.

Like one inspired I thought of his first illustrious ancestor, on four legs, the one who had once so heroically looked at a king,

with the result that not only did he gain a perpetual permission for his race, but he has passed into an immortal proverb. That was not his only glorious deed, however, for it was he who first encouraged the Modest. If it had not been for that historic cat, what would have become of them! When the Modest want to say something, no matter how modestly, and get frightfully snubbed, don't they always declare that "A cat may look at a king"? Really, that illustrious cat has never had his due! Besides heaps of other things, is he not the original type of the first true Republican? I would like to know what the world would have done if he hadn't looked at the king? Why, it was the first great Declaration of Independence.

Besides, don't we owe to him, though hitherto unacknowledged, those underlying principles of that other glorious Declaration of Independence, the happy result of which seems to be that tea is so awfully dear in America?

No, one doesn't hold with a cat's laughing at a king. No cat should laugh at a king, for that leads to anarchy and impoliteness

and things going off. It is the cat who looks civilly at kings who has come to stay, along with republics and free thought. But possibly that is the one little drawback — thought is so dreadfully free! It used to be rather select to think, but now everybody thinks, and kings and other important things are not nearly as sacred as they used to be, and even the Modest get a chance. I suppose it is the spirit of the Age.

I had got so far and had to nibble again at my pencil for further inspiration, when the door opened and my landlady appeared. She is a worthy woman, and she holds her head on one side like an elderly canary-bird.

She spoke with a remnant of breath.

"If you please, ma'am, we have lost our Alonzo the Brave."

"You will probably," I replied with great presence of mind, considering that I had no idea what she was talking about, "find him with the fair Imogene."

Here my landlady, with her eyes penetrating the corners, gave a cry of rapture, "There he is! Glory be!" And she pounced on the black and purring stranger,

who rose and stretched his back to a mountainous height and his jaws to a pink cavern.

"This is our Alonzo the Brave," and she pressed his rebellious head against the pins on her ample bosom.

"Oh, indeed," I said politely; "and though he is your Alonzo the Brave, I hope you won't mind his being my preface, will you? And may I ask what does he like best in the world besides Imogene?"

Alonzo the Brave had partly wriggled out of her ardent embrace, so that he now hung suspended by his elastic body, while his legs dangled at amazing length.

"Me," and my landlady simpered.

"I mean in the eating line," I explained.

Catnip, said his biographer, was his favourite weakness.

"Then get him a pennyworth of catnip and put it on my bill," I said benevolently. For I thought as she carried him off struggling, even a poor preface is cheap at a penny, and without Alonzo the Brave there would have been no preface, and without his heroic ancestor the Modest would never have had a chance!

I do hope this explains the following pages. I have not, like Alonzo's ancestor, strictly confined my observations to kings. I have, indeed, ventured to look at all sorts of things, many of them very sublime, and solemn and important, and some less so; and, as the following pages will prove, I have availed myself freely of the privilege of the Modest.

If the two greatest nations of the world have served me as "copy," it is because they are very near and dear, and the Modest, like more celebrated writers, have a way of using their nearest and dearest as "copy," especially their dearest.

In conclusion, I trust I have adequately explained, by help of Alonzo the Brave, that it is the privilege of the Modest to make observations about everything — whether anyone will ever read them, why — that's another matter.

A. E. L.

KEMPTOWN, January, 1906.

Contents

	Page
The Champagne Standard . . .	1
American Wives and English Housekeeping	40
Kitchen Comedies	75
Entertaining	104
Temporary Power	130
The Extravagant Economy of Women	153
A Modern Tendency	171
A Plea for Women Architects . .	181
The Electric Age	188
Gunpowder or Toothpowder . .	196
The Pleasure of Patriotism . . .	211
Romance and Eyeglasses . . .	220
The Plague of Music	230
A Domestic Danger	245
A Study of Frivolity	259
On Taking Oneself Seriously . .	271
Soft-Soap	290

The Champagne Standard

The Champagne Standard

THE other evening at a charming dinner party in London, and in that intimate time which is just before the men return to the drawing room, I found myself tête-à-tête with my genial hostess. She leaned forward and said with a touch of anxiety in her pretty eyes, "Confess that I am heroic?"

"Why?" I asked, somewhat surprised.

"To give a dinner party without champagne."

It was only then that I realised that we had had excellent claret and hock instead of that fatal wine which represents, as really nothing else does, the cheap pretence which is so humorously characteristic of Modern Society.

"You see," she said with a deep sigh, "I have a conscience, and I try to reconcile

a modest purse and the hospitality people expect from me, and that is being very heroic these days, and it does so disagree with me to be heroic! Besides, people don't appreciate your heroism, they only think you are mean!"

I realised at once the truth and absurdity of what she said. It does require tremendous heroism to have the courage of a small income and to be hospitable within your means, for by force of bad example hospitality grows dearer year by year. The increasing extravagance of life is all owing to those millionaires, and imitation millionaires, whose example is a curse and a menace. They set the pace, and the whole world tears after. Because solely of their wealth, or supposed wealth, they are accepted everywhere, and it is they who have broken down the once impassable barriers between the English classes, with the result that the evil which before might have been confined to the highest, now that extravagant imitation is universal, permeates all ranks even to the lowest.

The old aristocracy is giving place to the new millionaires, and it gladly bestows

on them its friendship in exchange for the privilege of consorting with untold wealth and possible hints on how to make it. The dignity that hedges about royalty is indeed a thing of the past, since a bubble king of finance is said to have been too busy to vouchsafe an audience to an emperor.

There is nothing in the modern world so absolutely real and convincing and universal as its pretence. It has set itself a standard of aims and of living which can best be described as the Champagne Standard.

To live up to the champagne standard you have to put your best foot foremost, and that foot is usually a woman's. It is the women who are the arbiters of the essentially unimportant in life, the neglect of which is a crime. It is the women who have set the champagne standard. A man who lays a great stress on the importance of trivialities has either a worldly woman behind him, or he has a decided feminine streak in his character.

Yes, it is the champagne standard; for nothing else so accurately describes the

insincere, pretentious, and frothy striving after one's little private unattainables. It is aspiration turned sour. Aspirations, real and true, keep the world progressive, make of men great men and of women great women; but it is the minor aspirations after what we have not got, what the accident of circumstances prevents us from having, which make of life a weariness and a profound disappointment. Not the tragedies of life make us bitter, but the pin-pricks.

In America, for instance, one does not need to be so very old to be aware of the amazing changes in the ways of living, the result of an unbalanced increase of wealth which has brought with it the imported complexity of older and more aristocratic countries. It is the older civilisation's retaliation against those blustering new millions that have done her such incalculable harm. Indeed, it would have been well for the great republic had she put an absolutely prohibitive tariff on the fatal importation. The republican simplicity of our fathers is slowly vanishing in the blind, mad struggle of modern life —

in a standard of living that is based on folly. It is easier to imitate the old-world luxury than the old-world cultivation which mellows down the crudeness of wealth and makes it an accessory and not the principal. Unfortunately we judge a nation by those of its people who are most in evidence, and do it the injustice of overlooking the best and finest types among its wealthiest class: men and women who are the first to regret and disown what is false and unworthy in their social life. We assume that the blatant, self-advertising *nouveau riche*, with whom wealth is the standard of success and virtue, is the national American type, instead of the worst of many types, whose bad example is as well recognised as a peril to character in America as in other countries. Wealth in all nations covers a multitude of sins, but in America, to judge from recent developments, it would seem to cover crimes. Is not America now passing through a gigantic struggle, the result of the hideous modern fight for wealth, in which the common man goes under, while the reckless speculators who juggled with his hard-

earned savings use these same savings to fight justice to the bitter end? Possibly in no other enlightened country in the world could such titanic frauds, with such incalculably far-reaching effects, be so successfully attempted, and that by a handful of men who had in their keeping the hopes of countless unsuspecting people who trusted to their honesty and uprightness.

The race for wealth in America has become a madness — a disease. It is not a love of wealth for what it will bring into life, of beauty and goodness, but a love of millions pure and simple. Who has not seen the effect of millions on the average human character? Who has not seen men grow hard and rapacious in proportion as their millions accumulated? Who has not seen the tendency to judge of deeds and virtue by the same false standard? A shady transaction performed by a millionaire is condoned because he is a millionaire and for no other reason. Without millions he would be shunned, but with them he is regarded with the eyes of a most benevolent charity. It is high time indeed that a prophet should arise and

preach the simple life, but let him not preach it from below upwards. He must preach it to the kings of the world and the billionaires and magnates, and above all to the lady magnates; and let him be sure not to forget the lady magnates, for they are of the supremest importance and set the fashion. Let him turn them from their complicated ways. Now the ways of magnates and all who belong to them are very instructive. The well-authenticated story goes that at a dinner party the other night at a magnate's,—to describe his indescribable importance it is sufficient to call a man a magnate—after the ladies returned to the drawing-room, the hostess, her broad expanse tinkling and glittering with diamonds, leaned back in a great tufted chair — just like a throne *en déshabille*—and shivered slightly. A footman went in search of the lady's maid.

"Françoise," said the magnate's lady with languid magnificence, "I feel chilly; bring me another diamond necklace."

Yes, let the prophet first convert the magnate and the magnate's "lady" to a simpler life, then the simple life will

undoubtedly become the fashion, for the small fry will follow soon enough. Are we not all like sheep? And what is the use of arguing with sheep who are leaping after the bellwether?

There is one safeguard for the American republic, and that is, in default of any other description, its ice-water-drinking class. In its ice-water-drinking class lies its safety, for that represents the backbone of the republic. It represents a class which, in spite of the sanitary drawbacks of ice, is a national asset. It seems curious to boast of the people who drink ice-water, and yet they represent American life, simple, sincere, and untouched by the sophistries of the champagne standard, and of a social ambition imported from abroad; decently well off people, but not so well off but that the only heritage of their sons will be a practical education. Already we are reaping the curse of inherited wealth in America, where, unlike England, it has no duties to keep the balance. The English aristocrat has inherited political duties and responsibilities towards his country which, as a rule, he

faithfully performs, and which make of him a hard-working man. Unfortunately it is the fashion for the rich American, in his race for wealth and pleasure, or out of sheer indolence, to ignore politics and all that is of vital importance in national life. And until the best elements of the nation take a practical interest in the government of their country and in the administration of its great institutions, the nation cannot reach its highest development. Just now, unhappily, we have a warning example of what happens in America to the second generation that inherits instead of makes incalculable wealth. The District Attorney of New York, in a case which has shaken the foundation of all commercial rectitude, is quoted as saying of the still young man whom the accident of inheritance placed in a position of despotic power over millions of money and millions of modest hopes: "He is an excellent type of the second generation." It is an epigram which should be a warning, as the cause is a menace to American business methods. For did not Emerson say, studying American ways more than a generation ago when American life

was simpler: "It takes three generations from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves." But in that warning there is hope, for in the scattering of wealth lies America's chance of salvation. Plain living and high thinking once characterised what was best in American life, and the men and women whose thoughts were high and whose living plain were mostly from that simple ice-water-drinking class that has produced much of the nobility and patriotism of America. That ice-water has helped to encourage dyspepsia, granted; but even a great virtue can have its defects.

How different was the America of our childhood! One remembers the time when, if the honoured guest was not invited to quench his thirst with ice-water at the hospitable board, he was, as a great treat, furnished with cider. Claret was the drink of those adventurous souls who had traditions and had been abroad. There was no champagne standard — champagne only graced the table on solemn, state occasions. But in these rapid days the hospitable people who would once have offered you a serious glass of claret now give you cham-

pagne. And because Smith, who can afford it, gives you good champagne, Jones, who cannot afford it, gives you bad champagne. But the bad and the good champagne are both tied up in white cloths, as if they had the toothache, so how awfully lucky it is that when the label is fifth-rate, Mrs. Jones, trusting in the shrouded shape, can offer bad champagne with ignorant satisfaction.

It is interesting to study the evolution of Jones. There was Jones's father; he didn't pretend. He lived in a modest house and kept one servant and had a fat bank account. Old Mrs. Jones, a charming woman with the manners of a duchess, helped in the housework. Old Jones dined all the days of his life at one o'clock, and had a "meat-tea" at six. At ten every night he ate an apple, and then he went to bed at ten-thirty. He left a handsome fortune to his children, who shared alike, which made Jones, Jr., only comfortably off. Now young Jones and his wife began by following in the footsteps of their parents, but Jones made money in business, and the result was that Mrs. Jones had aspirations. Aspirations are always a femi-

nine attribute. So Jones bought a fashionable house, and instead of one servant Mrs. Jones keeps four; instead of a joint and pie, American pie, for which his simple appetite longs, Jones has a six-course dinner at eight which gives him dyspepsia. There is not the ghost of a doubt that Mrs. Jones is too afraid of the servants to have a plain dinner. And it is also quite certain that she goes to a fashionable church for a social impetus rather than divine uplifting, and that she sends her only child, Petra Jones, to a fashionable kindergarten so that the unfortunate child, who is at an age when she ought to be making mud pies, shall be early launched into fashionable friendships. Indeed, one day, in a burst of confidence, Mrs. Jones described how Petra had been snubbed. It seems that the Jones's child met another small schoolfellow in the park in custody of the last thing in French nurses. Being only six and still unsophisticated in the ways of fashion, she rushed up to the young patrician and suggested their playing together.

"No, I can't play with you," the young

patrician sniffed — "for my ma don't call on your ma."

Why is it that the pin-pricks of life are so much harder to bear than its tragedies? Mrs. Jones mourned over this snub to the pride of Jones, but she has no leisure to observe that Jones, her husband, is meanwhile growing old and hollow-eyed with care and business worries and the expense of aspiring. O champagne standard! O foolish Mrs. Jones!

As long as we can be snubbed and suffer what is the use of telling us that we are born free and equal? The only liberty we have is to breathe, and our equality consists in that, plebeian and patrician alike, we are permitted to take in as much air as our infant lungs can accommodate. After that our equality ceases.

When Mrs. Jones goes to the expense of giving a dinner party, does she only invite her nearest and dearest, who are acquainted with the extent of Jones's purse? Not a bit of it. She invites most of her enemies and some strangers. There really should be a limit to the attention one bestows on the stranger within his gates.

There was dear old Mrs. Carter Patterson in the days of my youth. She was a funny old woman with a nose like a beak, a rusty Chantilly lace veil, and a black front. She stopped my mother in the street and explained that she was in a tearing hurry as she was about to call on Mrs. Mangles.

"Why, I thought," and my simple mother hesitated, "I thought you said you hated her."

"So I do, my dear, so I do, but I always make a point of calling on my enemies, it's no use calling on one's friends."

Who has not studied the increasing difficulty of that surgical operation called the launching of a young girl into modern society. Every year it grows more and more difficult — society seems to form a kind of trust to keep out the young girl, at least to judge from the extreme difficulty of getting her in; and after she is in, the bitterness of it, and vexation of spirit, only the young girl knows. The operation is different in different countries, though one has heard of the agonies endured in England during the process. In America the

ceremony is as expensive as a wedding. Because one girl has had a huge coming-out reception, that shakes her pa's cheque book to its centre, why the other girl must have a still bigger one.

I have been a witness to the coming out of Maria's only child Nancy. The education of Nancy was not so much to teach her anything, as to give her the best opportunity of making fashionable acquaintances. It was my privilege to study her mother's heroic efforts to get Nancy into a fashionable dancing-school, the entrance to which gave the fortunate one that supreme distinction which nothing else could. Twice "mother" failed, and she wept in my presence in sheer weariness of soul, but the third time Nancy got in — not triumphantly, but she slipped in by some oversight of a fashionable matron whose duty it was to keep out ineligible little children, and "mother" was happy, though the little "400" boys in the round dances did neglect Nancy, who looked shyly and wistfully about, a small melancholy wall-flower, with her eyes swimming with tears, as the little boys wisely footed it with all

the most eligible of the "400" little girls. It is very instructive to see how early the sense of worthy worldly wisdom develops itself!

But Nancy had passed through all these stages of social martyrdom, and had comfortably hardened. Talk of the Spartan boy with the fox nibbling at his vitals! There are worse things than having a fox nibble at your vitals — Nancy knew.

When I met "mother" the morning of the coming-out of Nancy, she was nearly in a condition of nervous prostration. The house was in the clutches of florists and caterers, and father had fled to his office with the strict injunction not to appear until late in the afternoon. The awful problems were two: Would Nancy get as many bouquets as a rival "bud" — the technical name for a debutante — who had reached the acme of social distinction with two hundred and thirty-five, and would enough people come to make a show?

"I shall die if she doesn't get as many bouquets as that Bell girl," "mother" cried in an ecstasy of nervous anguish,

"but she has only got two hundred and ten."

"It's as bad as getting married," I cried sympathetically.

"Quite," and Maria groaned; "and without any real result."

Between a confusion of carpet covering and potted plants I went upstairs in search of the "bud."

"Only two hundred and ten bouquets," she cried in a tempest of discontent, "and Betty Bell (the rival bud) is to have a five-thousand-dollar ball and I am not! Mother says it isn't giving the ball she'd mind, but it's people not coming. It's easy enough sending out invitations, but the mean thing is, people accept and don't come. That's the latest fashion," cried this bitter "bud." "Mother said she'd be mortified to death to give a ball and have nobody but the waiters to drink up the champagne. We're of just enough importance to have our invitations accepted and thrown over if anything better turns up."

Such was her perfectly justifiable wail.

That afternoon at six I came again in my best clothes. A reception is after all

the simplest of social functions. It entails no obligations, and is as democratic as an electric car. It is perhaps one of the few functions in which even the noblest society may use its elbows, and as a school for staring, the kind that sees through the amplest human body as if it were mere air, nothing could be more useful and practical. It is an interesting study to observe how the female lorgnette is on such occasions so triumphant an impediment to sight.

Well, the whole street proclaimed the coming-out of Nancy. Carriages lined the curbstones and an awning announced the festive nature of the occasion. A band, crowded into a cubby-hole usually sacred to "father's" overcoats and umbrellas, tried vainly to penetrate the talk — there was a dense crush of human beings, and over all there was a mixed aroma of hot air, flowers, and coffee. At the top of the "parlour," before a bank of flowers, and burdened with bouquets, stood Nancy, all in expensive white simplicity, her face radiant, and supported by an utterly exhausted mother. Six young men who served

as ushers, in collars tall enough for a giraffe, brought up relays of friends to be introduced to mother and "bud" — all just like a wedding, only the hero was wanting, and for "mother's" sake one did wish the occasion had had a hero. Last year's "buds" were brought up and examined this year's "bud," and there was a great deal of chatter and hand-shaking, of the pump-handle kind, and a pushing past each other of magnificent matrons in the latest things in hats.

I was escorted up by one of the young giraffes, who solemnly introduced me. A mighty different "bud" this from the one of the morning.

"I've got two hundred and forty bouquets," she whispered triumphantly; and just then I caught mother's weary eye and knew as absolutely as one knows anything in this uncertain world that "father" had sent in thirty. Really, there is nothing so loving, so generous and so weak in this wide world as an American father.

I was swept on by a crush of prosperous matrons accompanied by expensively simple daughters — the matrons making obviously

disparaging mental criticisms about each other's daughters. For real simple, unassuming jealousy there is nothing like rival mothers! So I was pushed into the dining-room where the chief ornaments were four Gibson girls in party frocks who, at a flower-laden centre-table, in the mellow light of rose-shaded candles, dispensed glances, coffee, smiles, and tea, and other frivolous afternoon refreshments. They had the best of it, these beautiful young things at the table, especially when they could annex an occasional man.

At half past seven the last visitor had gone, the function was over and Nancy was "out," and "mother" sat drearily on a couch which had the demoralised air of furniture horribly out of place. Everything drooped except those stalwart American beauty roses, so costly, so splendid, so hard, and so unromantic. O national flower of Americans!

I caught a glimpse of "father" vanishing down the front steps on his way to the club. Nancy had flung herself into a big deep chair, and from this point she looked coldly at "mother."

"The Perkinses did not come," was all she said, but "mother" gave a start and groaned. The Perkinses represented the bloom of the occasion, and the Perkinses had not come. There was nothing further to be said — Maria did remark that it was as expensive as a wedding. "And to think it isn't dinner time yet," she added drearily.

"At any rate Nancy is 'out,'" I said.

"But it was horribly expensive."

"Well, then, what did you have all this expense and bother for?"

"One has to do it," she cried in stony despair; "it's our standard —"

"Champagne standard," I interrupted.

"I don't know what you mean." Maria has all the virtues, but no sense of humour.

"Then, for goodness' sake, why have her come out at all?"

Maria shuddered and looked cautiously about. Nancy had vanished.

"I'd die of mortification if she didn't marry. I won't have her turn on me and say I hadn't given her a chance."

"But, Maria, you married your good and prosperous Samuel without coming out. That didn't frighten him away! The

highest standard your parents ever aspired to was cider, and that only on state occasions."

"That is all changed," said my unhappy friend. "We have got to —"

"Pretend; that's just it, Maria! But why don't you give up pretending and be happy? Did our parents ever pretend? They didn't. Think of your father's simple home and his big bank account, and then think of your Samuel with all his expenses and his cares."

But Maria was not to be convinced by argument — she was completely crushed by the Perkinses not having come, and she declared obstinately that her supreme duty in life was to get Nancy married — well if possible, but at any rate married.

. . . . . .

Maria is only a type, but she stands for aspirations in the wrong place, and she is worn out with it. She has many virtues — that is, she has no vices. Her whole soul is wrapped up in Nancy. Nancy is her religion. She believes in Nancy, though she never took her Samuel seriously. She married him in the simple period of her

existence, and by the time she began to aspire she had other ideals, and Samuel was more of a bore to her than an ideal. Samuel did not take to her new aspirations as readily as she. Men never do. Nancy constituted her romance; and yet she was an impartial mother, for mothers can be divided in two classes, those who are too partial and those who are impartial. Her mission in life was to marry off Nancy.

"I'd rather she'd be married unhappily than not at all," she said to me one day when I saw her again. "A real unhappiness is more healthy to bear than an imaginary one."

Nancy herself furnished the particulars of her own private creed.

"I'd rather be married even if I were unhappy. It's my own unhappiness, and I want my own whatever it is."

I suggested that there were other aims in life than getting married.

"Perhaps," she said, "but I haven't any. I've been brought up to that. Most girls are, only they don't tell. I haven't to earn my living and I haven't any talent for anything. If I don't marry, Ma'll be

mortified to death and she'll show it and that'll make me mad. Father won't care and he won't notice that I'm growing older, though we girls don't grow old prettily. We get pinched, and our little hands — for we have little hands — grow clawy, and our hair gets thin at the temples, and we have too much gold in our front teeth. Of course we are real pretty when we are happy. But think of spending life seeing father go to sleep after dinner, and mother playing patience — ugh! I've told mother if she doesn't take me abroad I'll go slumming. There's no chance here. Half the men are too busy making money to get married and the others are afraid."

"So this is your education," I said later on to Maria; "I am glad you have only one child."

"So am I," said Maria wearily, "for two would kill me."

Then in a burst of confidence: "She hangs fire. She isn't strikingly plain nor strikingly beautiful, one's about as good as the other. She has no accomplishments, and her golf is only so so. She isn't fast, nor loud, nor smart. She is just

an average girl and," Maria cried in vexation, "there are such heaps of them. The luncheons and dinners and theatre parties I have given without result! It is so tiresome for her always to be bridesmaid. So we're going abroad. Father is willing to live at the Club. Our men are too comfortable to get married. It's simply wicked!"

"Maria," I said from my inmost conviction, "you have manœuvred, with the result that you have frightened off the eligibles — struggling eligibles, and those are sometimes the best. But what struggler would dare to ask a champagne-standard girl to keep his "flat"? It's flats these days. He wouldn't think of dragging a white-tulled angel from a palatial residence to a flat and a joint! You have frightened off the young men. Marriage is getting out of fashion, and so are the comforts of a home. It's all your fault, you champagne-standard mothers!"

Such was the coming-out of Nancy.

Now in my young days there was certainly no formal coming-out. All I remember is that one day I still wore my

hair in two pigtails, and the next day old Mrs. Barnett Pendexter called. She was a fumbly old woman with her fingers, and by accident — my sisters always declared — she left two cards instead of one. The fatal result was that my pigtails were pinned up and I was dragged out by my mother when she made calls, for she declared, being socially learned, that now I was undoubtedly out. It was also a little surgical operation in a minor way, but compared to these days how simple and how inexpensive.

If one were asked which of the passions is the greatest force in modern Society, one could safely reply "jealousy." Jealousy makes the world go round. Don't we want what all our neighbours have, and don't we want it with all our might and main? If we want it badly enough crime will not stand in the way of getting it. Is it not at the bottom of most of our defalcations, embezzlements, and commercial dishonesty in general? The bank president who borrows the bank funds for his private use, the cashier who falsifies the books, the little clerk who embezzles as the result of

expensive tastes,—are they not all the results of the falsity and extravagance of modern life? Compared to the judicious business man who keeps just within the border line that saves him from the criminal law, and who lays traps for his credulous fellow-creatures in the shape of alluring companies, the pickpocket, who runs some little risk, is a blameless and worthy character. The champagne standard is the whole world's measure, and even justice bows to it when it interprets its laws for the rich and the poor. A company promoter, who in the course of his career has wrecked thousands of lives, can, if he is only rich enough, consort with the noblest and most virtuous of the land; but of course he must be rich enough. Deny it who can? Be rich enough and you are forgiven all crimes. O Champagne Standard!

Last year a certain deceased millionaire was tried in London for gigantic frauds, and all the newspapers described how pleasantly he greeted his friends when he entered the court and took his seat behind his counsel. Positively not a bit proud. There was also a sympathetic description

of his clothes! The moral is, be a scoundrel on a magnificent scale and you are still respected; indeed, you even become a hero in some people's eyes. Justice being blindfolded cannot see, which is a great convenience. Besides, are we not taught that God helps those who help themselves?

In America there is no aristocracy yet, but God help it when the time arrives, for it will be an aristocracy based on the most unworthy of foundations — money. As for romantic traditions, well, it will take several centuries to weave a halo of romance around a pork-packer, a petroleum magnate, a railroad wrecker, or the company promoters who flourish as the green bay tree. In centuries they may arrive at the dignity of being ancestors — at present they are just what they are, and are to be judged accordingly.

There is a growing mania in America these days for ancestors. It is a luxury which can be indulged in only after people have accumulated money. If you are grubbing for your daily bread it is a matter of profound indifference to you where you came from, seeing what you have reached

is so unsatisfactory. But when your bank-book bursts with deposits and your greed for money is partly satisfied, it is natural that you should look out for new fields for your aspirations. So wealthy Americans are just now very busy unearthing ancestors, in spite of not becoming parents, and getting their genealogical tree planted, and rummaging in the dust of the past for possible forefathers, and buying family portraits. Yes, there is a great trade in family portraits — the dingier the better. At any rate it keeps the pot boiling for many a worthy painter, and that is something. Not that one has a rooted aversion to ancestors — they are not to be despised if they leave you an honourable name, a nice old estate, and cash and some brains, but there are ancestors of whom the less said the better, and whose only legacy would appear to be a slanting forehead, a weak chin, and a tendency to unlimited viciousness.

The Herald's College could tell many a queer story of our sturdy republicans in search of their forbears. An English woman told me that a New York family

had annexed a crusading forefather of her own, as well as one who had had his head chopped off, and to whom they had no more right than the grocer round the corner. She acknowledged that they were a pretty bad lot (the ancestors), but she objected to have strangers meddle with them. "You are funny republicans," she added genially, "coming over here and grabbing our ancestors."

Now there is nothing so frank as a frank Englishwoman. "What is the use of celebrated ancestors," she added, "if your whole present family are as dull as ditch-water and bore you to distraction? I'd swap off my crusading ancestor and my chopped-off-head one any time for a cousin with brains. But mind you, I don't want your American millionaires grabbing 'em without leave."

There are the Bedfords of New York. Susan and I went to school together. Hitherto she has put on no airs with me, for I know the family traditions, and that her excellent father began life as a cobbler. Then he forsook cobbling and started a corset manufactory, which was a distin-

guished success because he had invented a bone so like the whale's that even that clever fish could not have proved it wasn't his; and the deception made the old man's fortune. Thereupon he rose superior and soared from corsets to real estate, and in real estate he made what was briefly described as "mints." It was in the corset period that Susan married Joe Bedford who was a drummer in the business, and though he retired from corsets and went into real estate along with his father-in-law, Susan was always conscious that he could never accommodate himself to the grandeur of his new life. She had to do all the aspiring, and it was she who passed a sponge over their previous existence, and every time I saw them in New York she had added a new lustre to their glory. The last time the door was opened to me by a footman, brooded over, as it were, by the very noblest kind of English butler. I saw at once that the whole family were afraid to death of him. But in spite of her grandeur, Susan herself saw me downstairs to the front door, in the American fashion, though conscious of the profound

and stony disapproval of the English butler. As I came opposite the hat rack I caught sight of a satin banner covered with cabalistic characters floating gently over Joe's modest bowler that swung from a peg.

"Our coat of arms," Susan explained by way of introduction. "Just come home. It cost a great deal; everything costs so much. We have the same arms as the Duke of Bedford. It is pleasant to have a duke in the family."

"Since when?" I asked, and stared in astonishment.

"I found them in the dictionary six months ago. I had it done at Tiffany's. It looks so stylish on the plates and the writing paper."

"Come in here, Susan," and I led her into her own parlour, for I did not wish to lower her in the estimation of that noble being who was preparing his mighty mind to show me out. "Listen to me; you and Joe haven't any more to do with the Duke of Bedford than the cat's foot. Besides, his name isn't Bedford but Russell. For goodness' sake don't make such an idiot of yourself."

"I guess," and Susan was deeply offended, "I guess the young man at Tiffany's knows more about it than you do. He engraves for the first families, and he said it was all right."

It was quite recently, too, that I crossed from Boston with three gentle female pilgrims in search of an ancestor. The youngest was nearly seventy, and we were barely out of sight of that famous tail of land called "Cape Cod" when they told me their simple story. They came from Cape Cod and their homestead stood on a sandhill and faced the sea. A long straggling street up a sand bank culminated in a meeting-house with a steeple as sharp as a toothpick. They were innocent and graphic old ladies and they had only two vivid interests in life; one was a Devonshire ancestor supposed to have died three hundred years before, and the other, two cats called respectively Priscilla and John Alden. The ancestor was the one romance of their placid lives, and it became a question of going to find him, now or never; so here they were. They had turned the key in the lock of their Cape Cod homestead and

bidden a long farewell to Priscilla and John Alden, and as they described their grief I saw their three pairs of benevolent eyes fill with tears.

"The sweetest cats that ever breathed," said the oldest, with a face like a benediction.

"What did you do with them?" I asked after a sympathetic pause.

"We chloroformed them," said the dear old thing whose face was like a benediction.

I offered up an involuntary smile to the manes of these deceased martyrs, Priscilla and John Alden, and I am absolutely sure the ancestor wasn't worth the sacrifice.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the champagne standard, like hotel cooking, has no nationality. It is everywhere, and one studies it according to one's experience, but it is undoubtedly the curse of an age that only judges of success by material results. It is above everything a menace to character.

Modern life is the apotheosis of trivialities, and perhaps there is nothing more curious and melancholy than to observe their exaggerated importance to the world

in general. One asks what is the use of such childish fretting to people confronted by tragic realities. What is the use of snubbing any one as if we were immortal? The truth is, each, in his own estimation, is immortal. Who thinks of dying? Why, if we expected to die at once, we certainly would not snub any one, and, in the face of so tragic a probability, we would not notice being snubbed. And yet there is absolutely nothing so absolutely certain as death, before which every pretence, every ignoble aspiration, every sordid ambition, stands naked and futile and, in some other world possibly, ashamed.

But one cannot help wondering what kind of a blissful place the world would be without the champagne standard. How good and honest we should be if we didn't pretend — how easy it would be to live! Are not most of the trials of life, apart from its tragedies, its results? Most of our harrowing anxieties usually have their rise in aiming at what is beyond our reach. And yet what, in the name of common sense, what is it all for? What is the use of pretending? What is the use of doing

things badly when it is so much easier not to do them at all?

Yes, indeed, the greatest heroism in these days is to have the courage of one's income. It is possibly a little awkward at first, but what a relief to be able to say simply, "I can't afford it," and not lose caste! But Modern Society is ruled over by "Appearances." Appearances are a kind of Juggernaut which requires our happiness and peace and contentment as a daily sacrifice — but not the wise and honourable appearances, but the little, mean, false ones, and those are the most common.

One is inclined to think, however, that even the champagne standard may yet find its Nemesis. For if the world goes on at its present rate all its wealth will in time be swallowed up by the Trusts, and the Trusts will in turn be swallowed up by the mighty maws of the few whom God, in his righteous wrath, permits to plunder the earth, just as He once permitted a deluge for the regeneration of the world. And the blessed result will be that the whole wide world, being as poor as the traditional

church mouse, will come to its senses, and the first thing that will happen will be the abolishing of the champagne standard. So herein lies the world's salvation, to be saved it must be ruined; and for the first time Trusts may be looked upon in the light of the benevolent saviours of mankind. When we are all as poor as the most plausible of them can make us, and that is saying a good deal, behold we shall then finally cease to pretend.

Of course each of us has his own ideal of the millennium, but with multi-millionaires setting the pace, and all the rest of the world racing after, it must be agreed that the millennium is not yet. But when it does come, there will be no more champagne standard, and each person will be judged after his honest value and not his purse. If he has a noble soul nobody will mind if he is a bit shabby, and if he is a man of brains he may even live at the wrong end of the town. In that happy day everybody will have the courage of his income, no matter how small, and when one is shown hospitality it will not be according to the champagne standard, but

according to a standard of honest kindness; and no matter how simple it is, if it is only a crust of bread, no one will criticise, and no one will apologise. If in that blissful time Jones dines in a cut-away, why not? And yet is it not true in these days that Jones's fine character is often enough overlooked in a disapproving contemplation of his coat?

However, the millennium has not arrived, and the simpler life, though the fashion as a subject for sermons, is certainly not practised — as yet.

Recently a king of finance gave a great musical function — the gambols of the rich and great are always called functions. There were so many billionaires present that a modest millionaire was quite out of it. Everything was of the costliest, the lighting was entirely by radium, and the music provided was of an expense supremely worthy of even the consideration of billionaires. The very greatest violinist had been induced, by the offer of a small fortune, to play, and indeed, while he played, the host and another billionaire intimate amused themselves calculating the money value of

each tone at the rate the great artist demanded for playing. Just as they finished, and he finished, and a languid murmur signified the approval of the glittering audience, the young daughter of the billionaire host, who had, apparently, not received the last polish in the school of unutterable wealth, put an entreating hand on her father's arm:

"Do please introduce me," and she mentioned a very famous name, "he does play so divinely."

"My child," and the magnate, who had started life peddling tripe, spoke with haughty disfavour and drew his eyebrows together in a frown, "we pay such people, but we don't know them."

O Champagne Standard!

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American Wives and English Housekeeping

THE CLEVER woman who wrote *American Wives and English Husbands*, put her Californian heroine in a position in which the one problem she was not required to solve was English housekeeping. She might break her heart over her English husband, but the author does not add to our pangs by relating how her American bride, having first studied the peculiarities of her Englishman, next varied her soul's trials by "wrestling" with the lower but equally irritating problems prepared for her by the English tradesmen. Under which general term are included all the male and female creatures who, having helped to set up a brand-new household, immediately proceed to hinder it from running.

The problem of English husbands I leave to more gifted pens, but I may perhaps be permitted to tell what the American woman

experiences, who, having "pulled up stakes," plants herself on English soil. This era of international marriages is not at all confined to the daughters of American millionaires who can afford the luxury of English dukes. Nor, in giving my experiences, do I address the prospective Anglo-American duchess, who would not be likely to spend several sleepless nights, trying to decide whether she should or should not take her carpets or the "ice-chest." However, it is well to give one little word of advice to the American girl proposing to turn herself into an English-woman; and that is, she must be very sure of her Englishman, because for him she gives up friends and country, and he has to be that and more to her.

America has a bad reputation for being a very expensive place in which to live. The large earnings are offset, it is said, by expenses out of proportion to the wages. Both facts are exaggerated; and, in contrasting English and American housekeeping, one of the first reasons, I have decided, why English living flies away with money is that the currency itself tends to expense.

To start with, the English unit of money value is a penny — the American a cent, but observe that a penny is *two* cents in value. I am asked eightpence for a pound of tomatoes; I think "how cheap" until I make a mental calculation, "sixteen cents, that's dear." It is the guileless penny which, like the common soldier, does the mighty executions and swells the bill. One looks on the penny as a cent, and that is the keynote of the expense of living in London.

To go farther into the coinage: there is the miserable half-crown — it is more than half-a-dollar, and yet it only represents a half-dollar in importance. "What shall I give him?" I ask piteously of my Englishman when a fee is in question. "Oh, half-a-crown," is his reply. I obey, and mourn over twelve-and-a-half cents thrown away with no credit to myself.

Poor English people who have no dollar! Don't talk of four shillings! Four shillings are a shabby excuse for two self-righteous half-crowns. Oh, for a good simple dollar! Five dollars make a sovereign, roughly speaking — that wretched and delusive coin

which is no sooner changed into shillings and half-crowns than it disappears like chaff before the wind. Now good dollars would repose in one's purse, either in silver or greenbacks (very dirty, but never mind!), and demand reflection before spending.

Think of the importance of a man's salary multiplied by dollars! The wealth of France is undoubtedly due to her coinage —francs are the money of a thrifty middle-class — the English coinage is intended for peers of the realm and paupers. A hundred pounds a year is not a vast income, but how much better it sounds in dollars — five hundred dollars; if, however, you multiply it by francs, twenty-five hundred francs, why it sounds noble! Count an Englishman's income by hundreds, and it does seem shabby! Dollars, when you have four thousand to spend, represent a value quite out of proportion to the eight hundred pounds they really are.

Change your English coinage — don't have half-crowns or sovereigns, but nice simple dollars (call them by any other name if you are too proud to adopt dollars), and see the new prosperity that will

dawn on the middle-classes. A little tradesman struggling along on one hundred and fifty pounds a year will feel like a capitalist on seven hundred and fifty dollars. This is not straying from the subject, for it was my first observation in English economics.

On the other hand, the days have passed in America for the making of sudden and great fortunes, nor are the streets paved with gold. The lady from County Cork does not step straight from the steerage into a Fifth Avenue drawing-room (unless by way of the kitchen), but there's work, and there are good wages; and if the lady from County Cork and her brothers and cousins would work as hard in Ireland as they do in the United States, that perplexing island would bloom like a rose. That their fences are always tumbling down, even over there, and their broken windows stuffed with rags, is only an amiable national trait to which the Irish are loyal even in America, just to remind them of home.

"Everything is cheaper in England," they all said when the decisive step whether to take or leave the contents of our large house had to be taken. "It won't be

worth packing, taking, and storing. Send everything to auction."

That was the advice. I compromised, and one day half of the dear familiar household gods were trundled off to be sold — alas! and the elect were left to be packed. Every American house has a grass-grown, fenced-in space at the back of the house called a yard, for the drying and bleaching of the laundry. Ours was invaded by three decent men and piles of pine boards, and then the making of cases and the packing began.

The packing was contracted for. The chief of the firm came, looked through each room, estimated, and gave us the price of the whole work completed and placed on the freight steamer. One is told that the English are the best packers in the world, but I have had more damage done in two cases sent from Bristol to London than in eighty cases sent from Boston to Liverpool. The three men worked three weeks, and then took all the cases out of the house and put them on the freight steamer, and the price of all this wonderful packing was about forty pounds. What will surprise

an English person is that not one of these men expected a fee. My one ceaseless regret is that I did not take everything, from the kitchen poker to the mouse-trap.

On the arrival of our eighty cases in London, they were received by the warehouse people, who sheltered them until the brand-new English house was ready, which was not for a year. The packing, sending, and storing of all this furniture was under one hundred pounds, which, with my English experience, I knew would have bought nothing. I did question the wisdom of bringing carpets, and I do not think it pays unless they are very good and large — the remaking and cleaning cost too much to waste on anything not very good. Having my furniture safely landed, the next step was to get a house.

One finds that the moderate rents asked for English houses is misleading, for in addition the tenant is expected to pay the rates and taxes, which add to the original rent one-third more, only somehow this fact is ignored. Get a house for one hundred and fifty pounds, and you can add fifty pounds to that by way of rates and taxes. Nor does

that enable you to get anything very gorgeous in the shape of a house, but one obtainable for about the same price in New York or Boston, minus those comforts which Americans have come to consider as a matter of course, until they learn better in England. Only in flats are the rates and taxes included in the rent, and when flats are desirable they are expensive.

Now, living in flats is undoubtedly the result of worrying servants, and it is obtaining here as rapidly as the English ever accept a new idea — but being impelled by despair they are becoming popular. Small flats for "bachelor-maids" and childless couples are abundant and well enough, but for families who decline to be trodden on by their nearest and dearest these are nearly impossible, and when possible very dear.

The "flat" contrived for the "upper middle classes" is a terror, and is devoid of the comforts invented by American ingenuity and skill, and the good taste which makes American domestic architecture and decoration so infinitely superior to all. I do not wish to be misunderstood — if money is no object one can be as com-

fortable in London as in New York, but I am only addressing the "comfortably off."

In New York I was taken to see a very inexpensive flat, which proved to me that the average man can make himself thoroughly comfortable there. It was in an "apartment house" near Central Park. The street was broad and airy. To be sure the flat was up three flights, and there was no lift — but that is nothing. It consisted of four rooms, besides a kitchen and bathroom, and a servant's room. It was entirely finished in oak, and the plumbing was all nickel-plated and open, and it was furnished with speaking tubes. In the nice kitchen was an ice-box, and the kitchen range was of the best. This model flat cost six pounds a month, including heating, and could be given up at a month's notice.

No model flat turning up here, we were reduced to take a house, for which we were willing to give from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds. The agony of that search, and the horror of the various mansions offered! For the first time I recognised the wisdom of putting no clothes-closets in London houses, when I think of

the repositories of dirt they would inevitably become.

At that time I was not on such intimate terms with the climate as I have since become, and did not understand that it is humanly impossible to rise triumphant over fogs, smuts, and beetles. For my benefit, grim and dingy caretakers rose out of the bowels of the earth as out of a temporary tomb (always in bonnets), and showed us over awful houses in which every blessed thing had been carried away, even to the door knobs and the key-holes — that is of course the metal around the holes.

Awful, closetless houses, guiltless of comfort, with dreary grates promising a six months' shiver, and great gaunt windows rattling forebodingly. As for the plumbing — but it is well to drop a curtain over the indescribable. One does protest, however, against the people who live in these houses — houses whose discomfort an American artisan would not tolerate — looking with ineffable self-complacency on their methods, and sniffing at our American ingenuity and our determination to make life comfortable.

Of course we got a house, thanks to no estate agent, but as we could not rent it we had to buy it — or rather the thirty-eight years' remnant of a lease — a mysterious arrangement to an American. It was rather hard to feel that the house and all our little improvements would, after thirty-eight years, revert to the Bishop of London, to whom the estate belongs, but we thought that after thirty-eight years we might not be so very keen about it. So we disturbed an aged woman in a dusty crape bonnet, and some friendly beetles, and they left the premises simultaneously.

We took an architect on faith, who was to be our shield and protector against the contractor; then we folded our hands, as it were, and retired to an hotel and proceeded to recover from the horrors of house-hunting. This interval was taken by the tradesmen of our new neighbourhood to recommend themselves to me, whose address they discovered by some miracle. They grovelled before me, they haunted me with samples — eggs, cream, butter, bread, followed me to the ends of England, and I finally succumbed to the most energetic.

Gradually, one gets accustomed to "patronage" and "patron," rare words in America, where the "I am as good as you" feeling still obtains. I am becoming used to them as well as "tradesmen" and "class." I acquiesce in a distinct serving class, conscious that not to be aware of the dividing gulf would mean the profound scorn of those we have agreed to call our inferiors.

To return to the house. The architect and I looked it over — everything was wanting. The plumbing was new, but clumsy and inadequate. In an American house much less costly, there would be a hanging cubpoard in each room, thus dispensing with the clumsy and expensive wardrobes. The plumbing would be pretty and nickel-plated, resisting the action of the air, and easily kept clean. Here it is always brass or copper, clumsy and easily tarnished.

The architect suggested only the obvious, and with unwarranted faith I hardly ventured to suggest anything; but when the summer brought an American friend, who looked over the house, then approaching

completion, she sat on the solitary chair and shook her head.

"He hasn't thought of a single thing," she cried. "Think of not having a dumb-waiter (English: dinner-lift) in this unheated house. Stone walls and cold blasts —don't invite me to your lukewarm repasts! Besides you must have a hardwood floor" (parquet floor) "in your drawing-room" (being an American she really said *parlor*). "Think of all the dirty carpets it will save," she urged. "My dear, you don't mean to say that you will live in this Bunker Hill Monument of a house"—she comes from Boston)—without speaking tubes?" She was aghast.

"What an architect! Supposing you want to speak to the cook, why you'd have to run down four flights for a *tête-à-tête;* then supposing you want coals up four flights — must the maid climb up four flights to find out what you want before doing it? My dear, even an English servant has human legs, and she can't stand it."

I was convinced. I spoke to the architect, and he was politely acquiescent, and as all these very necessary suggestions came

late they were doubly expensive, and now I have come to the conclusion that domestic architecture is the proper field for a woman with ideas — a mere man-architect does not know the meaning of comfort, ingenuity, resource, and economy.

As the house declined to get done, I braved the architect, the contractor, and the workmen, and arrived one day in company with a bed, a table, and a chair (also a husband), and took possession.

I did have one treasure at the time — a caretaker. She saved my life, and she protected my innocent self from the British tradesman, whilst she gently taught me what the British servant will and will not do. She informed me when I was paying twice as much as right to the obsequious tradesman, and she regulated the (to me) perplexing fee. She was very religious, and I think she looked upon me as her mission and that she was to rescue me — which she did. Her wages were one pound a week including her food, and to be just I could not have got such a treasure in America at the price.

The most obvious defect we discovered

in our house was that it was very cold — a universal English drawback — and the inadequate open fires seem to accentuate the chill.

Would that my feeble voice could do justice to the much-calumniated American methods of heating! It does pay to be less prejudiced and more comfortable! Possibly the furnace and steam heat may be a little overdone, but not with moderate care. No one can make me believe that it is healthy to sit shivering all over, or roasting on one side and freezing on the other. Neither do I consider a red nose and chilblains very ornamental. I admit that furnaces are not a crying need in England all through the winter, but from December to March it is a pretence to say you are comfortable, for you are not. There is no doubt but New England has bad throat and lung troubles, yet so has Old England and the hardening process does not save, if statistics are right. If I must take cold and die, at least I prefer to do so comfortably.

If there were a furnace I should not need gas-stoves (which are certainly no more poetic than a register or a radiator, besides

being distinctly sham), nor would there be a perpetual procession of coal-scuttles going upstairs, unless an open fire is desired for additional warmth and cheerfulness.

This brings one to the relative costs of coal, water, and gas. London coal is greasy, soft, and dear. Where the hard coal is burned in the States, it leaves white cinders and ashes. It burns slowly and is therefore very profitable, and the price averages about twenty-four shillings a ton. Must the cheek of English beauty always be adorned with "blacks"?

The water-rates here are just double those of Boston, where, O rapture! we had two bathrooms, and where the "sidewalk" (American for pavement) was thoroughly washed every morning. In Boston gas was charged for at the rate of four shillings for one thousand cubic feet; here we pay three shillings for the same, and yet for infinitely less gas used our bills here are mysteriously larger. Our London electricity is both expensive and poor; consumers are at the mercy of the companies, and a little wholesome competition is very imperative.

The English are reckoned a nation of grumblers, but one finds that the grumbler ends in grumbling, though in moments of supreme anguish he writes to *The Times*, which permits, with the impartiality of Divine Providence, both the just and the unjust to disport in its columns.

Considering the papering and painting of the house done — the painting done very roughly from our point of view. Then the kitchen needed a new range and so we got the most expensive of its kind — expensive for America even — but the acknowledged solidity of English workmanship (which sometimes becomes clumsiness) is well in place here. The dinner-lift had been constructed for one flight, and was surprisingly dear, while the parquet floor in the drawing-room cost twenty-seven pounds where it would have cost fifteen pounds in America.

This brings me to a point on which I wish to lay great stress: the remarkable progress in America in all the applied and domestic arts within the last ten years, which leaves England far behind. Our English house was just old enough to be surprisingly ugly — it belongs to the early

Victorian period. Without wishing to spend too much money in its decoration, we did feel that we ought to put away the funereal mantel-pieces and set up something more æsthetic.

Our architect—always obliging and never suggestive—took us to see wooden mantel-pieces, and we found them expensive and clumsy. In this strait my Englishman had an inspiration. "Buy them in New York" —we were just going over—"and you will find them prettier, better, and cheaper even if the freightage has to be added to the price."

I would not believe him because I also was still labouring under the delusion that England was cheap and America dear. However, we went to New York and there we bought three wooden mantels—six feet high and six feet wide—of the best quartered oak, of so simple and graceful a design that they are always noticed and admired. These three were packed, sent, and landed at our front door in London, and the price, all included, was not much more than we should have paid for the only one in London of which I approved. I feel con-

vinced that there is a great market here for American wood-work as well as leather, iron, and glass, for with English excellence of workmanship they combine a taste which adapts the best to its own uses. It would revolutionise the decoration of English houses.

The American has the advantage that he is not conservative where that stands between him and progress. That something was good enough for his ancestors is no reason why it should satisfy him. Because they chose to freeze is no reason why he should. Somehow, one always comes back to the inadequate heating, for as I write, my face is flaming while a lively icicle penetrates my spine.

The carpets being now down, I sent to the warehouse for the eighty cases, and after a year again looked at my household gods. They were very skilfully unpacked, but (here is the difference between the English and the American workman) each one of the men expected a fee every time he moved a box for me. Every time I went to the warehouse to open a trunk one or two men had to be fee'd, and at

the end it came to quite a little sum. In America, this would not have been expected, even for harder work done, and quite rightly, for the men were receiving proper wages, and I was paying the Storage Company liberally.

Our American furniture being cosmopolitan it was speedily at home in our English rooms; only these high studded rooms have such a way of devouring furniture! I thought piteously of that which I had rashly flung into the Boston auction-room, and when it came to replacing it, what did I find? That American furniture is much better and much cheaper. My soul yearned even for the big black chest of drawers which I had left behind, and it loathed the brand-new "art furniture," sticky with paste and varnish.

I demanded Chippendale and such — but, alas! their day is over, except for millionaires! Praed Street, Brompton Road, Great Portland Street, and Wardour Street should blush for the faked-up antiquities that ogle the passerby. I have no prejudice against modern furniture if it is good; nor do I love old furniture simply because

it is old, but undoubtedly the old taste was artistic and simple, and workmen had plenty of leisure and used their hands. But when it comes to American or English machine-made furniture I prefer the American because, it is in better taste, is made of better wood, and is cheaper.

I paid twenty-four shillings apiece for painted pine chests of drawers for the servants. In New York I saw a pretty one, all of oak with brass handles, for thirteen shillings. That is only a sample. Perhaps it is ungenerous urging the importation of American wares that can, because of English free trade, undersell the English manufacturer, but it remains true that it can be done, and ought to be done, and competition will improve the home produce, and there is room for improvement.

Well, having finally got my dwelling into some kind of order, I and my new British and old American household gods proceeded to keep house together.

This brings me to the question of English and American domestic service. It is an article of faith that America being the home of the free (and independent) will

before long have no servants, but only "mississes." It is not quite so bad, by any means. To be sure wages are much higher, but the American servant does twice the work of an English servant.

The average American family keeps two servants and a man who comes in twice a day to "tend" the furnace — the central stove which heats the entire house. The cook gets fifty pounds a year, the housemaid forty pounds, and the man, who gets neither food nor lodging, eighteen pounds. The total is one hundred and eight pounds, which includes the baking of all the bread and the doing of the weekly laundry for the entire house; the only additional expenses being for coal and soap.

Now for the wages in an English family of the same standing: — Cook thirty-five pounds, parlour-maid twenty-six pounds, housemaid twenty pounds, char-boy eight pounds, and fifty pounds to the laundry for work which is quite disgraceful. The sum total is one hundred and thirty-nine pounds, which does not include the feeding of an additional person, and a servant's board is a greater expense than her wages.

Distinctly the economy is on the American side.

That the servant business is a trade was a fact impressed on me for the first time by my very intelligent English cook. Each English servant has her trade which she knows and she declines to meddle with what she does not know, for which reason the dividing lines are rather strictly laid down. It was something I had to learn so as not to call on one servant to do the duties of another. Our American servants are more liberal, but now I realise that a good English servant is not so much an amateur as an American; but unless you wish to be unpleasantly enlightened as mistress, you must learn her line of duty well.

To keep house one must have servants, and in a strange place the first problem is how to get them. Supposing no friend can recommend you one, you are reduced either to advertising or the registry office. Registry offices, through which the majority of sufferers get their "help," riot in ungodly prosperity. They have managers and clerks, like a bank and, like other corporations, they have no souls. If you are a meek

lady they snub you, and if you are undecided they give you bad advice. At any rate the unscrupulous ones, and there are plenty of these, take your fee whether you get a servant or not.

It seems as if a certain amount of honesty should obtain even in this business, and I protest against paying five shillings for the mere joy of talking to a stately female, the presiding goddess in the generally ill-ventilated temple, who pockets my money and, as soon as my fee is safe, takes no further earthly interest in me. The methods of English registry offices seem to me the brazenest kind of piracy. Why don't English women rebel? Are they not the daughters and wives of grumblers, and probably the mothers also? However, fate was kind to me, and I got three servants, two of good village families, while the superior cook was the legacy of a brilliant woman, a good deal of whose wisdom I have since had at second-hand.

In the economy of the universe I know that there is a serving class, but we people of New England are not glib in the use of the word "servant." Do we not (in the

country) call them "helps" when the expression is base flattery? Here, class distinctions have put the matter on a practical footing — servants are servants and recognise themselves as such, and have that outward and visible sign of well-trained domestics which the Irish girl, direct from her paternal pig-sty, scorns in New York.

"You must not think," said my intelligent cook, "that we don't have our feelings as much as you." There it was, and she put herself as a matter of course on quite a different plane of human beings; the American servant, on the other hand, would consider herself of the same class, but ill-used by circumstances. A clever woman once said to me, "You can't expect all the Christian virtues in the kitchen for five dollars a week!" But we do! Perhaps the most precious gift I received when I left Boston was this advice: "Don't see too much."

Servants are like children; to keep them under control you must impress them. They object to a mistress who is too clever with her hands, but they like her praise. An American servant does not lose respect for

a mistress who, if necessary, can "lend a hand," but the English servant sees in such readiness a distinct loss of dignity. Many a time have my American servants seen me on the top of a step-ladder doing something that required more intelligence than strength, and they have respected my power to "do." Here something keeps me from the top of the step-ladder—instinct probably.

An American treats her servants more considerately than an Englishwoman. I am conscious of saving my servants too much; often (I confess it with shame) I run down a flight or two to meet them, and there is no doubt that the more I do the more unwilling and ungrateful they become.

With three English servants, besides a boy (not to speak of the laundry), now doing the work of two American servants, I proceed. I have mentioned a vital and nearly fatal subject—the laundry. In London it is awful but inevitable, and one cannot wonder any more at the stupendous dirt of the lower classes. Are their things ever washed, and if so who pays? After much observation I have decided that they

make up by a liberal use of starch what they lack in soap and water and "elbow-grease."

Language fails an American direct from the land of clear skies, sunshine and soap and water, when she contemplates the harrowing results of steam laundries. Really the most expensive of luxuries in London is to keep clean! When on Sunday afternoons one sees in Kensington Gardens a poor infant with a terribly starched and dirty cap on its head (in the form of a muffin), enveloped in an equally dirty and starched cape, and carried by a small girl in fearfully starched and dingy petticoats, one recognises maternal pride which rises superior to London dirt.

I am the client of a "model" laundry which sends our linen back a delicate pearl-grey. We call it affectionately the "muddle" laundry, and it costs us one pound a week to keep up to the pearl-grey standard. I wish we could go back to the days of chain-armour! What remedy? There is none, except country laundries for the rich and great, and starch for the poor! The only result of soft coal and dire necessity

is the excellence and cheapness of the cleansing establishments, without which the long-suffering householder would indeed sit in sack-cloth and ashes!

The one aim in furnishing our little house has been to keep the rooms free from all unnecessary draperies, which are merely traps for dust. It is hard for me to curb my feminine taste, which runs to sofa cushions and Oriental nooks lighted by Venetian lamps, but the exigencies of the London climate make me strictly Colonial (New England Colonial), and I can look into every corner — blessed privilege. The laundry being an accepted evil, one institution I willingly proclaim cheap — the scrub-woman who gets half a crown a day. Why don't all English scrub-women emigrate to the States in a body? They would get from six to eight shillings a day, overtime overpay.

Coming to the details of housekeeping. The custom here is that tradesmen call for orders. That also obtains in America, but many ladies there go to the markets and select and order for themselves, which is distinctly more economical. Here, as

the result of inadequate storage room, the expense of ice, and the by no means common use of the ice-box, there is not much food kept in the house. Now the laying-in of a good supply once or twice a week, if the mistress understands ordering and goes where she pleases, is undoubtedly cheaper than a daily ordering of driblets. It is the same with groceries, and these should be kept under lock and key! To the American that is not only an impossibility, it is nearly an insult, and I know of not a single American housekeeper who weighs out the groceries and other articles to be used week by week. It seems to start the mutual relationship of mistress and maid on a basis of suspicion.

A tabulated list of values is useless where prices fluctuate. I simply compare the differences as I have found them in my own little housekeeping. Meat, with the exception of fillet and sirloin, is dearer here, and so is poultry. Groceries average about the same, but coffee and flour are dearer. So are butter and eggs. Milk is the same, but tea, dear to the English heart, is so cheap that one can undermine one's ner-

vous system at a very small expense. Vegetables are good and cheap, but there is little variety, while fruit is dear.

How one does miss the ordinary cheap, good fruits, the California grapes and the Concords with their clusters of deep blue berries, a five-pound basket of which only costs a shilling. These were first grown in the old New England town that Emerson made famous. As for apples, pears and peaches, they are among the cheap fruits over the sea, and I maintain their superiority to their English kin.

What oranges equal the Floridas? The "forbidden-fruit" and the "grape-fruit," are only just making their conquering way into the English shops. If, as it is claimed, the one is the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden, Eve is nearly justified!

Yes, there are many good things in America and at reasonable prices. One has only to think of the divine "sweet corn" and "squash" and "sweet potatoes," and even the modest white bean from which all New England makes its national dish of "pork and beans."

Fish there is in great variety in London,

but that also I find dear. How is it possible for me to live in a land where lobsters and oysters are a luxury and not a necessity? Only a housekeeper knows what a refuge they are in trouble — when an unexpected visitor turns up. Is not the "oyster stew" (a soup of milk and oysters) an American national dish? But it could only reach perfection in that blessed land where to eat oysters is not to suck a copper key, and where they exist in regal profusion. I look with scorn at the measly, little lobsters for each of which the fishmonger demands three ridiculous shillings instead of one shilling and three pence. My heart longs for lobster *à la Newburg* till I remember that it takes three of these poor creatures to make the dish — nine shillings! So I continue to yearn and keep my nine shillings.

I cannot, however, leave the subject without expressing my admiration for the beauty of the English fish shops and butcher shops. To see a fish shop in London is to see a trade haloed with poetry. If I were a fishmonger I would sit among my stock-in-trade and be inspired. The fishmonger is an artist, he constructs pictures of still-life which would

have been revelations to the greatest of Dutch masters. In America our fish shops are devoid of poetry — the only compensation being to see the mountainous piles of oysters, ready to be opened, and innumerable great red lobsters.

To one item of American economy I wish to return with added stress; that is, the baking of bread in each house. This household-bread, if well made, is delicious, substantial, and economical. Usually the cook bakes twice a week, and besides that she is expected to have ready for breakfast either fresh baked "biscuits" (scones), "muffins," or "pop-overs." The yearly allowance of flour for each person is one barrel, and one reckons the expense to be about half what bread costs here. The English "double-decker" is a fearful and wonderful production that errs on the side of heaviness, just as the American baker's bread errs on the side of frivolous lightness, and nourishes like froth.

Whenever Americans proclaim the cheapness of a visit to London one finds without exception that they live here as they would not dream of living at home. Were they to

take lodgings there in the same economic manner, they could live quite as cheaply.

Another inexpensive commodity — which becomes very expensive in the end — is cabs. There is no doubt that they are cheap, and the fatal result is that they are used to an extent which makes them a serious item of expense to a family of moderate means. In America we pay two shillings each for a short drive in that stately vehicle called a "hack," and the price is prohibitive for an average family except on "occasions." So cab fares are not a serious item in domestic expenses.

From experience, I believe that America has a very unmerited reputation for expense. Live well, even if not ostentatiously, in London, and it costs fully as much as in New York or Boston. One does not judge by millionaires or beggars, for both are independent of statistics, but by the middle classes. Houses are here singularly devoid of comforts, and, taking the same income, I should say a middle-class American family could live there as cheaply as here, but with more comfort; and when it comes to schooling for chil-

dren, an item to which I have not alluded, with infinitely greater advantages.

In writing down these desultory reflections, I have been actuated by the thought that what I have learned may be of use to some puzzled American creature, who, having married an Englishman, proposes to live in England with only American standards to guide her. She must not believe, as I was told, that an American income will go one-third farther here. It does not. She must be prepared to accept other methods, even if, secretly, she modifies them a little to suit her American notions; but she must not boast, for her well-meaning efforts will, at best, be regarded with good-natured tolerance.

How I wish I could clap a big, stolid, conservative, frost-bitten English matron into a snug American house, with a furnace, and heaps of closet (cupboard) room, and all sorts of bells and lifts and telephones, and then force her to tell me the absolute, unvarnished truth! What would she say?

In conclusion, I wonder if I, as an exiled American sister, might make a plea to my American brethren? It is that when they

send their wedding invitations, as well as others, printed on their swellest "Tiffany" paper, they will kindly put on enough postage. Why should one have to pay fivepence on each joyjul occasion? On some, bristling with pasteboard, I have even had to pay tenpence, — why add this pang to exile?

Kitchen Comedies

MY superior cook had just given me notice, and I felt that the bottom had dropped out of the universe. She was an ancient retainer, according to twentieth-century standard, for she had been with me three months.

Her claim to fame rested on her once having cooked for Lord Kitchener. Whenever we had a trifling difference of opinion, which was seldom, because I didn't dare, she always retorted that she had cooked for Lord Kitchener, and, of course, I realised that I was but an unworthy successor to that great man. I suffered a good deal from his lordship in those days, and fervently pray that Fate will not throw in my blameless path either his parlour-maid or his laundress.

I had felt so safe, for cook lured me on with false hopes: she offered to make marmalade, and she demanded a cat. This was tantamount to staying for ever. She

made the marmalade, and we scoured the neighbourhood for a cat.

It may be a digression, but I really must remark here on the scarcity of any particular commodity of which one happens to stand in need. If the world can be said to be overstocked by any one article it really might be said to be cats; but had we been in search of a Koh-i-noor it could not have been more hopeless. We waited three months for a cat to be made to order, so to speak, and the very day his godmother left — we named him in honour of our departed cook —he appeared in the person of a long, lank, rattailed, ignominious tabby, on whom food made no earthly impression. His name is Boxer — Mister Boxer.

There is a great daily paper in London in whose columns the nobility and gentry clamour for what the Americans delicately call "help." I have myself pressed into four alluring lines a statement of the advantages I had to offer, and have received no reply. I have answered thirty-five advertising parlour-maids, enclosing stamped envelopes, and have had no reply. My cook having retired from the scene, and there

being nothing left to remind me of her but Mister Boxer, I again sought solace in those delusive columns.

"What have I done," I cried in anguish, "that all cooks should avoid me?"

Just then my dearest friend was announced; at least, she is as dear as distance will permit in London.

"What's happened?" she asked at once.

I explained mournfully that cook had gone.

"Whenever we had company she always said it wasn't Lord Kitchener, though I never said it was."

"I wish to goodness," and my friend flung herself into the nearest chair, "that my cook would go."

For a moment I gasped; it sounded so audacious.

"Give me a new cook every week," she cried, "but deliver me from eating the same cooking for twenty-six years, as we have done. Adolphus says he has eaten four thousand French pancakes filled with raspberry jam, in that time, and that he'll die if he eats another one. I don't blame him," she added gloomily, "but what are we to

do? I've urged her to better herself, but she won't. She quarrels with every servant who comes into the house; she's as deaf as a post, and she cooks abominably unless we have a dinner-party. If we weren't poor I'd pension her off; but we can't afford it," and she gave a bounce of resignation. "So don't talk to me of ancient family retainers; I'm sick of them!"

"You don't know what you are talking about," I said solemnly. "Listen to me. Last week I read an advertisement put in by a lady for her cook who was leaving—a cook with all the Christian virtues. I decided to answer it at once, but then I remembered the thirty-five who never replied to my letters. Just then He came down, placid and smiling — you know his way — and I explained to him that an Honourable Mrs. Smith was advertising for a place for her cook, in whom she took a personal interest.

"'My dear,' he said, 'don't write! Hire an ambulance and fetch her back, for a cook so recommended cannot be long for this world.'

"I took his advice and flew there in a

hansom, and I was so excited that I forgot to watch the horse's ears. It was ten o'clock when I reached the Honourable Mrs. Smith's, and it was just like a smart 'at home.' At first I thought we had gone to the wrong house. Five ladies were going in, and I passed six in the hall. There were several reception-rooms and not a chair without a lady. A perplexed, willowy creature without a hat, who turned out to be the Honourable Mrs. Smith, led me to a seat under an imitation palm-tree, and said it was dreadful and that she would never do it again. Her cook had received forty-five letters and twenty wires; and fifteen messenger-boys and thirty-two ladies had called.

"There were twenty letters from persons of title. Of course, I thought of Lord Kitchener, and felt it useless to stay, but as I had come the Honourable Mrs. Smith advised me to wait; she was very civil.

"Now, you know my three rules: I won't have mixed religions in the kitchen because of squabbles; I won't take a servant out of a 'flat'; and I don't want one who wears glasses.

"When the paragon and I met under the imitation palm, I found she was all I did not want. She questioned me severely, and said that she was a Roman Catholic. I felt that the religion of a being for whom twenty of the nobility were clamouring was no concern of mine, and I was surprised when she asked me to leave my address. So little did I aspire to the paragon that I did not even ask if she could cook. I passed ladies still arriving, and I was so melancholy that I went home in a 'bus.

"The next morning I had a letter, and I can truly say I never was so flattered in my life, not even when He asked me to marry him, for the paragon had chosen me out of one hundred and sixty-five ladies, exclusive of twenty of the nobility.

"To be sure, she went against all my principles and I did not even know if she could cook; but she had chosen me!

"So she arrived in company of three cardboard bonnet-boxes and a japanned tin trunk.

"He suggested that we should try her on a lunch, and we did. Thank goodness, we only had four of his chums, or I should

have died of mortification. After all, a clever man is sometimes duller than the dullest woman.

"How she cooked! It was appalling! Our parlour-maid, who has lovely manners, served a series of horrors as if they were a feast for the gods. After luncheon I found cook had broken my best cut-glass salad bowl, and two old Worcester plates, and then finished off with nervous prostration on the kitchen floor. He and I dined out that night; we had had too much of the comforts of home.

"The next morning the housemaid appeared with joy in her usually blank eyes, and said cook had gone and taken her boxes. At first I thought she had gone to High Mass. But no, she had really gone with her heavy tin trunk and the three band-boxes. How she got them down at midnight over four creaking flights of stairs without being heard, we shall never know, but she did. We found out afterwards that the Honourable Mrs. Smith had had this paragon just one month, and then she was anxious to get rid of her in a hurry; so she advertised. It was cruel, wasn't it?

Really, you know, it is wicked of you to complain when a servant has been faithful to you for twenty-six years."

My friend, who had been made cynical through suffering, said her cook wouldn't have been faithful if she could have got a better place.

The servant problem is indeed a very sore subject and singularly serious in England. For this there are two reasons: class distinctions, and also because so many more servants are needed here to do a given amount of work than anywhere else. Of course, a great leisured class means also a great serving class, and this serving class is useless for others, because it has been brought up to false standards of expenditure and to a good deal of idleness. Take this class out of the supply, and also the ever-increasing numbers to whom the smattering of Board School education has taught just enough to make them good for very little, so that in their proper pride they prefer to pass the weary years in cheap department stores or starve on factory wages. Then it is very conceivable that the servant supply does not equal the demand.

The result is that the registry offices do a thriving trade in sending out all sorts of undesirable and ignorant human beings to be thorns in the flesh of unsuspecting housekeepers.

There is something so pathetically reckless in our everyday life! How little we know of the servants we take into our intimate lives out of this terrible London with its vices and crimes, discovered and undiscovered. Recommendations are simply the blind leading the blind. The worst servant I ever had came with a glowing personal character.

Why will not women tell the truth! Perhaps it is characteristic of the weaker vessel to be more tactful, to put it delicately, than men. The lack of truth is partly a desire not to be bothered and partly a rather spiteful wish that the other woman may find out for herself, and also a cowardly fear to do a poor girl an ill turn. I rejoice to say that I found one honest woman who prevented my taking a burglar's assistant to my heart. But she was more than a woman, for she was also a physician. When a woman takes to a man's profession she at the same

time takes on something of a man's virtues.

To this lady I went for a personal character of an ideal housemaid, who said she had left her last place because the lady would not permit a "follower." Thinking I might not be so bigoted in regard to followers, human nature being human nature, I was prepared for an area romance, but not for a shilling shocker.

The ideal, so the lady told me honestly, was beloved by a job butler next door. She had been a nice country girl, but London and the job butler had proved her destruction. Area railings and bolts were as nothing to them. The area bell was for ever ringing, and when, by highest command, it remained unanswered, then did the job butler make a constant practice of ringing the front-door bell at unearthly hours, until finally the police had to interfere. Then, soured by the course of true love running so far from smooth, the job butler broke in one night and took things. Whether the loving house-maid was a party to the burglary was not proved, but she was discharged at a moment's notice, and it was then that she applied to me.

"I couldn't let you take her with eyes closed," said this true philanthropist, and so I declined the young burglar's assistant.

In another article I have compared English and American servants. Briefly repeated, the American servant will do twice the work of an English servant, nor are her rules cast-iron. She is open to reason, accepts new methods, and is not conservative. Conservatism, to a certain point, wherever found, represents a caution that is wisdom; but the conservatism of servants rests on colossal ignorance, the result of experience gathered from innumerable "ladies," many quite as ignorant as their servants. In these progressive days they keep them too short a time to care to teach them anything, and are mostly glad enough to "muddle along" any way. Never have servants been treated so well as now and never have they as a rule been so bad.

The world, in spite of its Rockefellers, Carnegies, and Rothschilds, is made up of people with modest incomes, and it is these who suffer most keenly under the mistaken aspiration of the servant class. The impossibility of getting servants, makes them

resigned to put up with unbearable shortcomings, for complaints result in immediate notice being given, and, after all, a bad servant is better than no servant. So the servant never learns, and takes her faults to the next sufferer.

The head of one of the most trustworthy of the London registry offices told me that the decadence of servants had its rise during the first Jubilee of Queen Victoria. There was such an influx of strangers in London that country servants were imported at huge wages, while, on the other hand, innumerable London servants threw up their situations simply "to see the fun." Since then, she affirmed, they have become a restless lot, changing from one place to the other without reason, except for the sake of excitement, and generally demanding big establishments, less work, and increasing wages. I have heard more complaints of servants in England in a few years than in my whole life in America.

The country servants' Mecca is London, and no sooner have they reached it than they join that restless procession with the japanned tin trunks. What becomes of

them? Where do they finally go with their false standards and blank faces! Those awful blank faces, as impenetrable as that of the Egyptian Sphinx.

Servants can be divided into two classes: those that aspire to serve the nobility, and the others who circulate among the middle-classes. The outward and visible distinctions of the former are the perfection of menial smartness, the women's starched apron-bows cocked to an impertinent angle, and their faces a blank. On the other hand, the middle-class servant never really succeeds to a blank face, which is the result of years of practice, and sometimes she even smiles. Also her apron is often put on in a hurry, and much starch brazens out holes; besides, her face invites "smuts."

Then there is a kind of manservant who revolves in boarding-houses and among certain kinds of distracted families, who is too awful to contemplate. Those fatal, ill-fitting evening clothes that shine with age and grease. He mostly comes from foreign parts, and, instead of presenting to the spectator a blank wall of a face, he stares at you in agonised misapprehension. As a

foreigner, he is naturally despised by his British fellow servants. Has not the Englishman a perfectly natural conviction that Divine Providence is a British institution, and that the heavenly language is English?

The rest of the world (with the exception in these days of Americans) he labels as foreigners, and foreigners he either tolerates, overlooks, or despises. His main attitude is one of amiable indifference, which is, indeed, his little weakness, for it blinds him to the possible strength of what he does not consider worth guarding against. I asked a distinguished Englishman if he often went abroad. "No," he said, quite without humour, "I hate meeting so many foreigners."

It is this British attitude which so endears him to the world at large, already exasperated by a little way he has of appropriating to himself nice, big slices of the earth. His enemies quite forget how he promptly turns these nice, big slices into civilised lands, which he throws open to the rest of the world. It is, possibly, as compensation, that the world turns over to him

its surplus hungry and idle population, who gather up English pennies with which they later on return to their various fatherlands, where they at once join the army of the bitter Anglophobes. And is not the dingy foreign servant one of the innumerable birds of prey that fill their poor, starved stomachs with English victuals? No wonder the English are so unpopular!

The English servant requires to be studied. The world's other servants are mere amateurs, the English servant has a trade. As an American, I proceeded to treat mine *à l'Americaine*, and I made my first blunder. A sensible American is, if not friends with her servants, at least friendly. The Englishwoman, if she is sensible, presents to her servants a surface of perfect indifference, and then she has peace, for the English servant despises a considerate and kindly mistress as not knowing her place.

The most difficult thing for a stranger to learn is that impalpable line between the different servants' duties. If one does not enumerate what one expects of them when they are hired, afterwards it is too late. They have, however, a rough sense of

honour and they generally do what they agree to.

According to the very common American custom, our house is furnished with speaking-tubes, and these nearly lost me a very superior cook. She was so superior that I was more polite to her than to any other human being; only when I was quite sure she could not hear, then did I call her by her pet name, Lady Macbeth. As I was looking timidly through the larder one morning she gave me notice. I never had a servant who had such lovely kitchen manners; her unfailing impudence was veneered by the most perfect propriety. "It's the speaking-tubes; I've nothing else to complain of; but I won't be talked to through the tubes. It's against my dignity to have other servants listen."

This time I pacified her, but later on I hurt her beyond forgiveness; I had sent the housemaid to call her one morning when she was very late. On my usual kitchen visit I found Lady Macbeth palpitating with rage — she, a "cook-housekeeper," called by the housemaid; she gave notice at once, and I realised then that there is no such

snob as a servant, and there is nothing more unyielding than kitchen etiquette.

The terrors of etiquette below stairs! There once strayed into my employ a housemaid whose career, hitherto, had been confined to lodging-houses. Upstairs she always looked frightened, and her face had a great attraction for "smuts"; but she was very willing and very incompetent. It is my experience that the willing are mostly incompetent. It was in the reign of Lady Macbeth, a tall, fair person, with blonde eyes and a cast-iron jaw.

"It is not for me to ask Madam to send Muggins away, but the rest of us will go if Muggins stays. I don't know where she has lived-out before, but she drinks out of her saucer and does not even know that we expect her to be down in our sitting-room at half-past four, dressed in her black, and ready to pour out the servants' tea." Of course, I gave Muggins notice, recognising that the lodging-house was her proper sphere, and in the month that followed I knew she suffered martyrdom. She used to wipe her eyes stealthily, and as she was not proud I showed her some sympathy.

"They ain't nice to me downstairs like you are, Ma'am," she sobbed, "though I'm doing my best. Cook says she won't wipe up the dishes for the likes of me."

"Never mind, Muggins; you'll be going soon and, after all, you have learnt a good deal here," I consoled her.

"I wish," said Muggins, "I was dead." Thus I discovered in Muggins an unexpected and interesting note of tragedy, but she melted away as they all do; one does not remember them as individuals but as materialised qualities, good or bad. However, some months after, I again encountered Muggins, looking like a bad imitation of a very middle-class young lady, in a huge hat like a cart-wheel, nodding with plumes, beside her an underdone youth, a bowler on the back of his head, so as to show the fine, bold sweep of his shiny black hair.

Muggins's smile showed that she had learnt a thing or two. Never more would she drink tea out of a saucer, nor plunge her knife into a mouth which, when we first met, was guiltless of front teeth. Now I at once recognised the gloss of six brand-new "store teeth." On the strength of what

she had learnt in my service she had graduated to higher spheres, where she could afford the luxury of a young man with whom to "walk out." It seems a servant's aim and ambition is to set up a young man with whom she walks out — the final goal being rarely matrimony; it only means speechless strolls through Regent's Park or Kensington Gardens, or the joyous revels at Earl's Court, if "she" stands treat.

Oddly enough, the English lover of the lower class is always speechless but very affectionate in public. The American of the same class is publicly prudish. It is, therefore, rather startling, as a blushing stranger, to see the loving couples that emerge out of the leafy paths of Kensington Gardens, clasping each other's waists, holding hands, or engaged in other miscellaneous fondling, which is probably the safety-valve that nature provides for those whose general and business expression is a total blank.

In the course of time, Muggins was succeeded by Jane; Jane of the Madonna face, a voice like a summer breeze, and her work divine. I basked in unaccustomed joy

until, unfortunately, one morning I asked her to send off an important telegram for me. "No," she said, in her sweet voice, "I won't go out this filthy morning." In the afternoon I so far regained my scattered senses as to call up Jane and give her notice. For an instant she turned white, then she recovered herself.

"I beg your pardon, Madam," she said, with respectful effrontery, "I shall not take your notice. Servants do not need to take any notice after noon."

"All the same you have had your notice; but I will, if you wish, repeat it to-morrow morning," I said, rather amused.

The next morning I had barely set my foot in the dining-room when Jane flew in, "I wish to give you notice, Ma'am," she cried, in a gasp. I recognised that I was defeated, for by some menial code of honour she felt that she could tell her next lady that she had given me notice. Whether the custom is legal or not, registry offices are not agreed, but I am now careful to give notice before noon.

The restlessness of the English servants, fanned by the Board Schools and higher

aspirations towards department stores, has produced the temporary servant. She flits from one distressed family to the other, and is at anyone's beck and call at a moment's notice; nor does she harrow her lady's feelings by staying that awful last month, when having done her worst she is invulnerable.

She has, of course, her disadvantages, along with her advantages. She takes naturally no earthly interest in her place (but none of them do!) for she flits like a grubby butterfly from one area to the other; she is, however, usually quite competent. Her example, on the other hand, is bad, for she gets high wages, a varied existence, and plenty of holidays, and, being temporary and independent, she does not work too hard.

There is really nothing so fatal as aspirations in the wrong place; to them we owe the servant problem. Now, the average man will sniff at the servant problem and, unless he has a great, broad mind, he will say to the partner of some of his joys and all of his sorrows, "You don't know how to treat your servants. My clerks don't bother me."

As if that were the same thing at all! Men's places are easily filled, and the average man is so anchored by domestic ties that he thinks several times before he gives warning, as indeed would a servant if she had a family depending on her earnings. But a servant usually has no ties. Her clothes are in her tin trunk, and her hopes in the registry office; thus, accompanied by the one and protected by the other, she goes on her winding way. If she had an idle or sick husband and half-a-dozen children to support, her attitude towards service would be less lofty.

Coming often from very poor homes, it is a curious fact that servants are always extravagant, at any rate with other people's belongings. Lady Macbeth, under whose dominion I languished for over three years, once confessed to me that she prided herself on her economy, which, she said, proved her to be of a different class from other servants.

Once, in a gracious moment, she also told me she preferred being a good cook rather than a poor nursery governess who, in the delicate and unwritten code of service,

is on a higher social scale, hovering, I believe on the outskirts of the lady pinnacle. She was kind enough to add that she would rather cook for some one she could look up to than teach a lot of stupid young ones. I was highly flattered, and so was the other member of my family, and we tried hard to live up to her good opinion. But no man is a hero to his valet, and she never repeated the compliment.

It is unfortunately true that domestic troubles, like rheumatism, toothache, and sea-sickness, from which one can suffer untold agonies, never arouse a proper sympathy. A man takes his business seriously enough, but he never takes his wife's housekeeping seriously.

"What in the world do you do all day long?" is his kindly, scornful cry; as if there were nothing to do! Yet it is that which gives women grey hairs and nervous prostration, and forms an endless topic of conversation among those who would gladly avoid the subject. It requires cast-iron, steel-bound nerves to confront rebellion in the kitchen, simply because of the terror of going from bad to worse. That awful

pilgrimage to the registry office, those hideous interviews, that terrible month of probation — your probation as well as hers. I defy two women to get together and not talk "servants" before the end of the conversation. Not even intellect will save you the flight to that inferno, the Registry Office.

There is one figure the dramatist of the future will never again be able to employ, and that is the ancient retainer. Never again will he follow his unfortunate master and mistress into exile, or lay down his life for them, or give up to them his humble earnings. Not only will the species be extinct, but the very tradition of it will have passed away.

The twenty-first century baby is destined to be rocked and cradled by electricity, warmed and coddled by electricity, perhaps fathered and mothered by electricity. Probably the only thing he will be left to do unaided will be to make love; and yet, possibly, that also is another form of electricity. At any rate, the ancient retainer is doomed, and it is the ancient retainer's fault. He has shown his decreasing interest in the

family, so no wonder the family takes no further interest in him. Job servants supply his place, and in illness a trained nurse does as well, if not much better.

Alas, it is a materialistic, utilitarian age and, if they did but know it, neither master nor servant can afford to stifle what remains of loyalty and affection. There are some things for which money will not pay, strange though it may seem in these days when everything has its price. The life which cultivates no feeling but indifference is to be deplored both for master and man.

There is something which makes of labour a higher thing than a mere barter. If that something really existed, we would not have that ceaseless, perpetually changing procession with tin trunks; personally, I should not feel so much that I was keeping a boarding-house for strangers, whom I pay instead of their paying me. If any of the old spirit were still left, servants would not be sent adrift to shift for themselves when their best days are over, and we should still see that phenomenon, an old servant.

What becomes of old servants? It is a mystery. Some possibly become meek, and

keep lodging-houses; others, meeker still, become caretakers. Can human imagination conjure up a more dismal fate? To be the companion of beetles and mice; to vegetate in a basement, gloomy with the abysmal gloom of London, and silent with the monumental silence of a deserted house!

Why not think of the possible future, that giddy, independent day, when to give notice, and feast on the consequent anguish, is a cool rapture? Once only I met an ex-parlour maid who rose superior to fate. She had become useful by the day. Then, unexpectedly, a subtle change came over her —she also aspired. She couldn't give warning, which would have been her natural outlet, but she felt that she owed something to her dignity before the other servants. From henceforth, she announced, she would really have to come in by the front door. I submitted, and the area steps know her no more.

It is a comfort not to be required to solve the problems of a future generation. I saw, however, yesterday, the thin end of the wedge in the form of a little red cart, in front of a house before which the usual "Sidewalk Committee," as they call it in

America, was gathered, lazily critical. Rubber tubes led from the cart into the open windows of a room, and a gentleman, apparently of elegant leisure, in uniform, superintended proceedings. For a moment I suspected fire, but seeing the calm, unruffled, unsoiled, unwatered appearance of everything, it suddenly flashed through my mind that what I so often had predicted was being fulfilled. Science was solving the domestic problem!

If we can clean a house by air, without the presence of a servant, before long some great man will teach us to cook in the same way. Some day electricity will release us from bondage. A cook will then be as unnecessary as a 'bus horse. Then let the young person, who now aspires to the factory and the department stores, threaten; we shall not care. Indeed, then may come our sweet time of revenge, for the department stores will be undoubtedly overcrowded, and the young person with the yellow tin trunk will then join a different procession in the days of that happy millennium.

Gladly would I have shaken hands with the gentleman who was superintending the

red cart, as the outward and visible promise of a new liberty, but I feared he might not understand.

If one might offer a suggestion to our great and glorious Republic across the sea in regard to any possible change in her coinage, it would be that, rather than the worthy lady with the Phrygian cap, it should bear the figure of the new "vacuum-cleaner," with its attendant Man; that represents something real, something up-to-date. The lady with the cap and stars is a myth, but what have we poor sufferers to do with myths? Let us, rather, give credit where credit is due.

The other day there was sent to me a voluminous list of the eminent scientists who are to lecture before the Royal Institution. As I read their famous names it did seem to me that if these giants of science would abstract their gaze from discovering new planets, new continents, new gases, and new rays, and would bring their mighty intellects to bear on what might be called kitchen science, the results would be incalculable.

Does not the old nursery wisdom declare, "Great oaks from little acorns grow?"

Invent an electrical cook, an electrical parlour-maid, an electrical housemaid, and an electrical boy for the boots. Think of the peace that will enter our homes; think of the just retribution that will overtake those awful offices that pocket our fees and supply worse than nothing! Think of the joy of millions of crushed housekeepers who, for the first time in the history of the world, will be able to look a cook squarely in the face and give her warning! Surely that is an aim which should satisfy the greatest intellect, because the greatest intellect (presumably a man, a brother, a father, or a husband) demands to be fed, not only often, but well.

Columbus was undoubtedly a great man, and the product of his time; was he not the first to do that little egg trick, and did he not afterwards discover the United States of America? But his fame, mighty and enduring though it is, will pale before his, the product of our time, the product of our dire necessity, who will give to the world what is greater even than a new continent — and that is Peace.

The greatest man of the future will be the Columbus of the Kitchen.

Entertaining

I ONCE met an Englishman in America who quite unconsciously explained to me the vital difference between English and American society.

He was so quiet, so gentlemanly, and so bored, and I had tried my best to say things. At last I cried in despair, "You Englishmen are so hard to entertain!" To which he replied, in slow surprise, "But we don't want to be entertained!" and that is it! And as man moulds the woman, and the woman makes society—therefore the English woman makes the society of which her Englishman approves, just as the American makes a society suitable for her "men folks."

Society is an elusive expression, and the human beings who constitute it are spread out in layers like the chocolate cake of our childhood, and every layer aspires to be the top one with the sugar frosting. In a kingdom the only ones who ever reach that sugar-coated eminence are of course the august

reigning family besides a very precious and select few, who must be horribly bored at having reached an altitude where there is no need of further aspiration. After all, it does add a zest to life to triumph over one's dearest friends and snub them. Of course a reigning family has the superlative privilege of snubbing, but they have to take it out in that, for to them is denied the joy of "climbing."

In America we are still in the beginning of things, and society is less complex, though more so than formerly, as the unfortunate result of increasing wealth. There was a golden age in America, when different cities each required of its votaries different qualifications to enable them to enter what is called "Society." In those days, it is pleasant to testify, it was what a man had done, intellectually or morally, that opened to him the iron-bound gates of Boston. You might be shabby and poor, and rattle up to Society in an exceedingly inelegant vehicle called a "herdic" (which shot you out like coal), but you were welcome if you were literary or scientific, musician or philanthropist. Money looked on respectfully at

the great and shabby, and was distinctly elbowed into a corner.

Something grips at my heart as I recall those bygone days when, as a very young girl, with a bump of reverence as high as the Himalayas, I sat in the corner of a splendid, shabby Boston drawing-room, and watched the great men and women, whose genius has left its imprint on American history and literature. They talked to each other, like ordinary human beings, and refreshed themselves with cold coffee and heavy cake, which was passed by such of the younger generation as the wonderful hostess could press into service. It is remembering this wonderful hostess that I am impressed by the truth that entertaining is not a fine art, but genius; it is not acquired, it is inborn.

In this shabby old mansion, with its relics of a bygone splendour, I saw for the first time the greatest hostess it has ever been my good fortune to meet. She was neither beautiful, witty, nor young, but she had the subtle quality which made you at once at home in her genial presence; which made you feel that you were the one

guest in whom she was interested, and this impression she made on everybody. Such was her magnetism that her spirit inspired every one, at least for the time being; a charming intercourse was the result, a geniality among her guests who, the very next day, in an overwhelming flood of shyness, would cut each other dead.

I have come to the conclusion that it is this abominable shyness which makes human beings so repellent to each other. It is one of the minor martyrdoms of existence resulting in an antagonistic attitude, not so much because one doubts the eligibility of the other, but rather that one doubts one's self. The agony of self-consciousness that surrounds one as with a thin coating of ice, out of which frosty prison one breathes ice. Did the other but know what one suffers!

It is often very difficult to distinguish between shyness and reserve, for one can be reserved without being shy, and one can be shy and in an excess of shyness frightfully unreserved. Though the English are rightly credited with having brought reserve and self-control—those characteristics

of the highest civilization as well as the lowest — to the greatest mastery, yet some of their amazing silence and immobility I believe to be shyness. It is a comfort to think so because, when one's vivacious disposition occasionally hurls one against an icy obstacle, it pains.

The English self-control — the result of generations of self-controlled ancestors — makes heroes in the battlefield, but sometimes it also makes of its bravest officers but foolhardy leaders of men. On the other hand, the national pride to suppress emotion retaliates on nature in a perfectly legitimate way; the emotion one suppresses, like all unused functions, ends by weakening, then disappearing. Not that the English are without emotion, but compared to other nationalities, the average Englishman's emotions are not easily stirred. Self-control is a very inspiring quality, but it is not so wonderful when the nature exercising it is tuned to a low key. English supremacy is so great that English self-control is the fashion, but while an Englishman's self-control is the icy covering to a quiet, placid mountain; the control a Frenchman or an

Italian assumes is the ice veneering a volcano.

Human nature is, to a certain extent, everywhere the same, and its simple and primal virtues are the same, only modified by race and climate. A man may be panic-stricken in disaster, not through cowardice, but because of uncontrolled imagination. No one will deny the superlative bravery of the French, but it is equally impossible to deny that in panics they sometimes lose their heads. In such circumstances the Frenchman does not show to the same advantage as the Englishman, not because of a lack of bravery, but because he possesses a fiery imagination. A Frenchman sees not only the present disaster, but he sees the results far into the dim future; the Englishman, with controlled imagination, if any, applies himself to a hurried view of the situation, and wastes no time on a thought of the future.

I knew an American of English descent who found himself in a burning German theatre one night. In the instant there was a panic, and a frantic woman clung to his arms and implored him to save her.

He was very near-sighted, and in the confusion his eyeglasses had fallen off. "I certainly will," he said, reassuringly, "if you will just let me put on my glasses." Then he climbed upon the seat, calmly gauged a possible chance of escape, and rescued his companion and himself. Yet the imagination which in certain circumstances results in disaster, under others gives a man a charm which makes his companionship a delight.

We Americans are a composite race; we have the coolness of the English, as well as the nervous tension of multiples of races, exaggerated by that glowing air, which has been wittily called "free champagne." The warring of these various elements promises results that cannot be foreseen in a nation which boasts of being Anglo-Saxon, whatever that may mean.

Years ago I remember the wrecking of a little pleasure boat near a famous island on the coast of Maine, and with what heroism the young men of the party saved themselves; that is where the foreign element brought with it a too active imagination. Now the atmosphere and the foreign ele-

ment in our blood make us a nervous, high-strung people, aggressively entertaining, and clamouring to be entertained.

In no way has the American invasion proved more triumphant than in the subtle change it is producing in the new generation of English girls. The English woman, like the clever antagonist she is, studies the skilful weapons with which the other has established her captivating supremacy, and is proceeding to use the same.

The new English girl has a charm and a vivacity, when she is not hampered by tradition, which must make the American girl look to her laurels. It will, of course, take her some time to let her spirit sparkle behind those statuesque features; still, she is undoubtedly on the road to vivacity. But the unbending and expressionless matron and immovable and monosyllabic young girl are still to the fore. A wintry smile on the matron's lips, enough to chill the most cordial guest, and the strangled remarks of the young girl and her slow, cold eyes, are the triumphant results of the nation of the self-controlled. Those cold eyes and that slow smile that have in them not the ghost

of humour. To get behind the eyes and the smile, to discover some inward fire! Is there any? One looks with envy at those faces which, from the lowest up, possess that in common that it is impossible to penetrate into the real self.

It must be confessed that what might be called the national manner is not conducive to geniality of intercourse.

The power a hostess has to blight a crowd of people with her own frost! There is the hostess who greets you as if she had never seen you before, and accepts your hand as if it were a slice of cold fish; there is the haughty hostess who shakes hands limply while she looks over your head at a superior guest; there is the vague hostess who smiles liberally, but sees you not; then there is the hostess with the surface geniality, who, with a hurried glance at you, gushes inquiries across you at the nearest man. There are as many varieties of hostesses as there are women, and they one and all drop you, and you merge into the army of starers, sometimes saved by an introduction to some other shipwrecked mariner with whom you escape to the tea-room.

The American fashion of dispensing afternoon tea is very pretty, and should be introduced here. Instead of leaving the serving of light refreshments to the servants, the American hostess chooses several of the prettiest girls she knows, and gives them the task of pouring out the tea, coffee, and chocolate at a centre table decorated with flowers, lighted candles, and all that coquettish art of which the American woman is past-mistress. The table should accommodate four girls, who, in their smartest party toilettes, are at once ornamental and useful, and the centre of attraction. They take away something of the stiffness which is inevitable among a crowd of people, many of whom are strangers to each other. Having to ask for a cup of tea from a pretty girl instead of a servant is pleasant, and generally leads to conversation, and it is considered the greatest compliment a hostess can confer if she asks you to "pour" for her. The more original the hostess, the more charming can she make her "teas," and what is usually a rather dreary function may be made entertaining and graceful.

The English hostess, ignoring her pretty

chance, leaves the tea-table, if there are many guests, to her servants. I once invited an English girl to "pour" tea for me, and she discomfited me exceedingly by asking why I did not get the servants to do it! And I had meant to pay her a compliment!

What a social comfort a hat is! It gives one so much moral courage. It is less terrible to encounter society in a hat; one can take refuge in it from the coldest blast. But in the evening, garlanded with roses and deserted, so to speak, by God and man, society is a trial.

There is no greater matryrdom for the middle-aged than baring their shoulders to the bitter air and transporting them to an evening function. To shiver for an instant in the smile of the hostess, and then subside against the wall, while the young and ardent flirt about with members of the other sex; or if they don't flirt, they appear to, which is just as well. A very beautiful woman once confessed to me in a moment of sincerity that she would be ashamed to be seen talking to another woman at an evening party. "I would rather be with

the most idiotic man, and look as if I were flirting hard, than talk to the most brilliant woman in the room. I always avoid women at parties."

It is not an age for conversation; our small-talk is soon exhausted, and for a woman to talk at length, labels her as a rock to be avoided. How can we have *salons*, we who cannot converse? We are the products of the daily papers, and our conversation is like their familiar small-talk column. So we have to have artificial aids to entertaining.

We are recited to, sung to, played to, and there being nothing so "cussed" as human nature, no sooner are we played to and recited to than our "cussedness" will out, and we are seized with a wild longing to talk, and talk we do at the top of our voices. Universal resentment is expressed towards the blameless arts that temporarily check our interchange of what it would be flattery to call ideas, but, in my own experience, when some stray man and I have stood together speechless, no sooner did the piano break into our appalling silence than ideas seemed to inundate us. The dumb man

spoke as if by magic, and I, who hitherto had nothing to say, couldn't talk fast enough.

The divine arts are too good to be wasted in a twentieth century drawing-room! Such conversation as there is, is amply accompanied by the pianola and the gramophone. These two awful inventions are to music what the chromo is to painting. They make music as vulgar as machine-made lace.

My first experience of the pianola was at the Universal Provider's. It was Christmas time, and I was so tired and harassed that I stood quite still in the surging crowd, oblivious of the sharp elbows of my shopping sisters, oblivious of dust and microbes, only conscious that I was dizzy with fatigue. Suddenly through the crowd I heard the familiar strains of the great romantic polonaise of Chopin—the one introduced by the exquisite *Andante Spianato*. It is a mediæval romance without words, of chivalry, tournaments, gallant cavaliers, and beautiful women; all this I heard in the piano department of the Universal Provider.

I couldn't understand it! What great

artist could so far forget himself as to play this divine work for a passing, heedless, irritable crowd. I pushed my way past my sisters, and possibly used my elbows. As I came nearer I grew confused by something exasperatingly perfect in the sound. The humanity of a single false note was wanting. I reached the crowd about the piano — well, everybody has seen a pianola! An imitation artist (he had long fair hair) steered the music and pumped in the expression at the proper place, while the indefatigable instrument ejected miles of punctured paper.

Never did anything so get on my nerves! I nearly wept. It is, perhaps, needless to say that the pianola and other instruments of its kind are of American origin, and, like all American inventions, they are labour-saving. You can be a Paderewski while you wait, but, thank Heaven! no ingenious American has yet invented a mechanical Joachim!

The first modest invention, the grandparent of the pianola, was exhibited in Boston (America) years and years ago, and was a modest little box, with only a small

appetite for punctured paper. One of the judges of the musical instruments at the exhibition showed me this curious music-box, to which, because of its ingenuity, they had decided to give a prize. Now the instrument has waxed greater and greater, and no one is safe from it, no, not if you go to the farthest desert or highest mountain. It graces afternoon teas, while the guests refresh themselves in stunned silence, or shriek at the top of their voices in vain rivalry, until they melt into the street, where the turmoil of cabs, carts, vans, and motors is soothing and peaceful by comparison.

For a stranger to penetrate into typical English social circles is often a blighting experience. If the hostess is a woman of the world, she comes to your assistance; but if she is the woman of an island, you find yourself stranded, unintroduced, and surrounded by more or less handsome and statuesque creatures, who would possibly be delighted to talk to you if you were introduced—or possibly not.

Oh, the debatable question of introduction! One sometimes thinks that in England people go into society just to avoid

each other; at least so it would appear from the ardent way in which they decline to be introduced. Conventional smart English society does not introduce, and that sets the fashion.

Society knows too many people, and refuses to know more; and its young men, having at their command only two feet apiece, also refuse to be introduced, for they cannot extend the field of their activities. The young man's toil consists largely in duty dances, for the only way he can pay a worried mother for a dinner-party is by dancing with her daughter, who still hangs fire. So his path is not always strewn with roses. Still his is easier than the "gal's," for he can decline to be introduced to her, and he does this often with the little caprices and insolence of a society belle.

"Do let me introduce you to my cousin," said a generous young soul to her partner, "she is such a nice 'gal.'"

"Please don't; I should have to dance with her, and I am full up," replied the youth, and so it is. Not that all girls are so generous, far from it. It is the exception when they overstep the bounds and introduce

an attractive girl to a young man. The result is that society is made up of cliques, wheels within wheels, and the cliques keep rigidly to themselves, and the loveliest young creatures outside languish against the wall, and no one takes pity on them.

Many are the complicated stratagems to introduce the young girl into the "smart set" of English society, and if the commander-in-chief ("mother") is not blessed with the best steel-covered nerves, she had better not undertake it. The commander-in-chief, of course a rich and great lady, borrows a list of unknown young men from other hostesses and invites them to her ball. Presumably grateful youths pay for this entertainment by dancing with the "gal," but not always.

After all, smart society is alike all over the world; like hotel cooking, it has no nationality. So America is ceasing to introduce, but this repression is not universal yet. All do not yet languish under self-inflicted boredom. A perfect American hostess makes her guests known to each other if they are strangers, and though fashion may protest, this is after all the only way to make a crowd of mutually

unknown people comfortable and not awkward. People, except those of great ease of manner, will not speak to each other unless introduced, and to talk to some one without the faint guide-post of a name is not very interesting. You may be talking to a very dull stranger, and turn away bored, when, had you but known that he was a great and shining light, how interested you would have been, and how deftly you would have turned the conversation into the one channel the great one always loves — himself.

Possibly Americans overdo the introducing; they are rather apt to overdo everything; it is the fault of a high-strung, nervous temperament; but of two evils let me rather be torn away from an interesting conversation every few minutes by a vivacious hostess, than be stranded in a corner looking blankly at my fellow man, for all the world as if I had strayed into a 'bus in a party gown. Blessed will the day be when the American invasion will temper English society with its own possibly rather effusive geniality.

The fundamental difference between the

two nationalities is that Americans love strangers, and the English hate them. The Englishman looks with suspicion on any one he doesn't know, root and branch; the American loves him until he hears of something to his disadvantage, or untill he gets tired of him — which happens.

The Englishman's aversion to strangers does not include the American, curiously enough. He does not call him a foreigner, and he likes him. He likes him partly because he really can't help it, and partly out of policy, and he looks charitably at his curious and original ways just as a big dog watches the gambols of a frolicsome puppy. He always remembers that that puppy is his puppy, and that some day he will grow into a big dog of his own breed, and — well, he respects the breed.

Not that the American man is in England as popular as the American woman; he is not. The charming American woman is the product of generations of hard-working fathers and husbands who have toiled for her, and toil for her, and the result is that in cultivation and attraction she has left her creator rather behind. When you

add to this his strenuous habits of business life, in which "devil take the hindmost" is the motto, and a very confident belief in his own ability, and his country's unmistakable destiny to "whip the universe," it produces a rather aggressive personality. So he is not as popular as his charming women, because, also, he represents a prophecy which is not unlike a menace. Yet the big dog watches the gambols of the little dog with tolerant good-nature.

Another factor in favour of the American woman is that she can be charming on two continents — the Englishwoman still confines her efforts to one — and she can be charming in the language of the two greatest nations in the world. Is this not a magnificent opportunity for her social genius? Descended, usually, from all sorts of races, America makes her what she is, and then boastfully sends the perfected article across the water to the old countries to ally herself with the best or the worst of their aristocracy. That it is rarely the case of King Cophetua and the beggar-maid one admits; but, after all, everything has its price in this world, and coronets come dear, except,

of course, to that one privileged class — the ladies of the variety theatres.

In speaking of the American man's aggressiveness, one does not wish to imply that the Englishman is not aggressive; far from it. There is no one so aggressive as an Englishman, but the difference is that the American is boastfully aggressive, and the Englishman quietly so, as one so sure of himself and his belongings that boasting is superfluous; which makes him all the more aggravating. The summit and climax of this aggravation is that the Englishman does not know that he is aggressive, and even resents it in his beloved Americans, and never suspects that his own want of popularity may be due to that same cause.

Years ago it was the Englishman who was the spoilt darling of nations; now he is making way for the American. But his early prestige was immense — it is still great, but it is a tempered greatness.

In those days when he went to America to harvest dollars (he rarely went for any other reason), he was received with a rapturous humility which was pathetic. We grovelled before him, we suffered his pe-

culiar manners, which had they been our own we should sometimes have labelled as bad, as the eccentricities of a superior being. We were flattered when our resemblance to him was pointed out, and to increase it we created that particularly obnoxious type, the Anglicised American; for, like all imitations, it is the caricature of the most unpleasant features of a resemblance.

In those days we took him to our hearts, to our homes, and to our clubs, and when sometimes we came to London to enjoy his return civilities, we had to be satisfied with very modest crumbs of entertainment indeed. But perhaps the Englishman said, in the subtle French tongue, "*Je paye de ma personne.*" That explains it.

We spoiled the errant Englishman most abominably; our idol got bad manners and a swelled head, and it always took him some time on his return to a nation that, after all, consists of Englishmen, to find his level again. The wife of a very distinguished man complained to me of the demoralised condition in which her husband — who had gone to America to lecture — had been sent

back to her. "It will take me years to unspoil him," she cried. "It's all the fault of your women, who flatter them to death! And that is the reason," she added, with some bitterness, "that Englishmen think they are so charming and clever."

Now that the Englishman has ceased to be so rare a bird in America, we receive him with less tumultuous rejoicing, and yet we still spoil him if he is distinguished or has a title. As for money, it is no object to us as credentials — we leave that to the English. A title? Oh, yes, we love a title! Why shouldn't we? Does not the Englishman, according to Thackeray, love a lord? With all it represents of tradition, romance, and history, is it a more ignoble passion for the snob than the worship of dollars, or more fatal to republican principles?

The American money-kings are as surely creating a class apart as ever did the English possessors of titles, and there is no greater nobility in a duke, by the grace of a gamble on the stock exchange, than a duke by the grace of tradition or history. Both may be represented by very poor creatures, but the duke of history has, at all events,

the traditions of his ancestry to excuse the interest he still excites.

Occasionally one hears of an aspiring American, who, captivated by the poetry of sound, buys himself a title, and ornaments his republican breast with decorations — the fitting reward of dollars and cents; but such a one has lost, if not his country, at least his sense of humour.

Still, it is not our republican money-dukes who will make or mar our nation; its stability rests on something nobler. Nor will it turn a great republic finally into a kingdom that we like titles as a child an unaccustomed toy. Is it not dinned into our ears that we are rich, and that the best is not too good for us? Is not the best in the world for us?

"The finest jewels are kept for the American market," a famous jeweller once told me. Are not the very best imitations of the old masters sold to us? We are willing to pay, and money in this world can buy everything except just one trifle — contentment. Apart from contentment, money buys everything. It is a credential for virtue and a good name. A millionaire must be

good, or Divine Providence would not so have prospered him, and for this all-sufficient reason London takes him to its innocent and gushing heart. Of course sometimes the millionaire is not a real millionaire, but no one knows until he is found out; but the next best thing to being a real, honourable millionaire, is to have unlimited credit. Blessed is the man who has credit, for some day he may promote a company that will enable him to pay his bills.

Yes, America is being rewarded for all the entertainments she has lavished on bygone Englishmen. She cannot these days complain of a lack of English hospitality. Columbia has a "real good time," and she drops the almighty dollar as she goes on her triumphant way, to the rapture of the English shopkeeper.

She worships English history, English titles, and English cathedrals. She gushes over all things great and good, and often she props up a rickety aristocrat with the splendid strength of her great gold dollars, and not the stiffest British matron dares sniff at her. She will introduce and she will entertain, and she will be entertaining. She is

often beautiful, and generally clever, — even if frothily clever.

Of all the American invasion she is the most subtly dangerous. You may keep off the American men with your fleets, and all the terrors of your newest million pounders, but how defend yourself from the American girl, who borrows a bow and arrow from a naughty little boy lightly dressed in two wings and a blush, and shoots right into your — heart!

Temporary Power

IT was in the "tuppeny tube" that the idea first came to me. I was filing out of the long car as expeditiously as I could, considering that I had to disentangle my feet from the heels of my fellow man, when a stern being in the brass buttons of authority gave me an unnecessary push, remarking briefly, "Hurry up!" Before I could wither him with a glance, the red light at the back of the train was winking jocosely at me, so there was nothing left to do but to follow my fellow sufferers, swallow my resentment along with the bad air, and proceed to soar upward.

Having recovered my mental balance I began to laugh. The awful majesty of temporary power, from a protoplasm up!

It is indeed a curious fact that the world is not so much governed by its ruling classes as by the lower ones, who exercise their temporary tyranny — in whatever capacity it be — with a colossal arrogance that leaves the arrogance of a higher sphere leagues

behind. Who has not seen great ladies, majestic beings in their own drawing-rooms, wait patiently before a counter while the young "saleslady" finished an interesting conversation with a colleague in imitation diamonds. Possibly in private life the young "saleslady" was not at all proud; but place her behind a counter, and it gives her a moral support that makes her rise superior to the aristocracy and crush the middle classes.

Never shall I forget the pathetic sight of a distinguished general — one who fought and won a battle in the American Civil War, that decided the fortunes of the North — buying a pair of kid gloves from a superior young person in a glove store. He waited a long time very patiently while she exchanged a light badinage with an idle youth, splendid in the tallest kind of a collar.

"If you please," the general ventured, seeing the talk was not of business. The haughtiness with which she turned on him! "What do you want?"

She leaned on the counter with both hands in that most delightfully engaging and characteristic of shop attitudes. No,

there was no badinage for the poor general, and as he had no taste and no ideas, she sold him the most dreadful yellow gloves, with which he was burdened when we met at the door. He showed them to me rather piteously.

"They don't look right, somehow," he sighed. "Why don't you change them?" I urged. "Because," the great man whispered, whose courage was famous in the land, "because I'm afraid of her."

Oh, the terrible tyranny of the shopgirls, or, rather, as we live in a democratic age and one is as good as the other, the shop young ladies. When one of them waits on me, or, to be quite exact, when I grovel to her, and she is very short and snappish and uninterested, I wonder what can be the kind of superior being to whom she, so to speak, bends the knee? Sometimes I think it must be the shopwalker, a great man, but human, except perhaps at Christmas time, but then I suspect he also may be afraid of her.

When she cries "sign" at the top of her penetrating voice, and I am ignominiously proved to have bought nothing, I realise that

I am disgraced, and can hardly bear the united glances of the young lady's scornful eye, and the milder but still reproachful glance of the shopwalker. He catechises me firmly for reasons why I don't buy, and offers me instead everything under the sun that I don't want. If my soul ever presumes to rebel it is when the young lady, not having what I am in search of, kindly advises me as to what I really do want — but even the traditional worm has been known to turn.

There is a delicate difference between the English and the American young saleslady. The American, being the daughter of the free, and distinctly of the independent, and having the chance of being the future wife, mother or mother-in-law of presidents, does not demean herself to be on a sympathetic footing with the public. If the public wishes to buy, she is willing to sell, but is perfectly indifferent. Look wistfully into the American saleslady's perfectly cold eye, if you are a wobbly lady and want some one to make up your mind for you, and you are met by a wall of the bleakest ice; nor does she thaw when you

have bought for a large amount. She calls "kish" in a shrill, unmoved voice, which summons a small boy or girl, who bears your money to the counting-house. Thereupon she looks indifferently over your head while you wait for the change, and you feel that in spite of everything you have failed to please her.

The result of this admirable attitude of indifference is that America is the paradise of "shoppers," ladies who have no intention whatever of buying, but who do love to see new things. It lies really between you and your conscience how many bales of goods you have unpacked without the remotest idea of purchasing anything. If at the end you make a few disparaging remarks and retire from the scene, the saleslady replaces the goods, perfectly indifferent as to your having bought nothing.

The English shopgirl, on the other hand, makes it a personal affront if you do not buy; but there is excuse for her often enough, for in some shops, unfortunately, it is the cruel regulation that if she misses a certain number of sales she is discharged. Whether

it pays to scare the saleslady into terrorising her customers to death is a question; personally, I avoid such shops; I cannot be lured twice into buying what I don't want because of the frown of the young lady. Nor does it even soothe my ruffled feelings when the shopwalker thanks me profusely as he countersigns the bill.

Shopkeepers should be very particular as to their young saleslady's nose; the very superior kind just crushes the public. England is a proof that it is not the eye that is born to command, but the stately Roman nose. It has given the world quite a wrong idea of Englishmen, who have gone on their triumphant way in the wake of that majestic feature, to the alarm and respect of the rest of the world. Had it been less aggressive, the world might possibly now fear England less and love her more. Yet such trivialities make history.

If you have a good conscience, the only wielder of temporary power who appears mighty and yet mild is the policeman. To the bad conscience he represents more the solid terrors of the law than the Lord Chief Justice himself. He is the only creature

from whom familiarity never takes away any of his terrors.

We once had an old cook who put it in a nutshell. "Happy is he who can look a policeman in the face," she declared. The wisdom of it! After all, is not half the world running away from retributive justice? Think, then, of the blessing of a legalised conscience. To be at peace with the policeman! Think of the rapture of envy a poor, hunted-down burglar must feel as he sees an ordinary citizen pass that awful being in a helmet without a quake.

I take this opportunity of offering to the great and polite one my little tribute of gratitude in the name of all the spinsters, widows, nursemaids, and puppy dogs who cross the street in the security of his outstretched hand. And of all maiden ladies, English and American, who seek his advice and ask him perplexing questions, which he alone can answer, for he is admittedly a combination of the street directory, the dictionary, and the "Encyclopædia Britannica" up-to-date. I have often wondered if he ever unbends? Does he ever take off

his boots and his helmet, or does he sleep in them? Does he ever sit down? It must be a great joy and pride to be his wife, to be, as it were, on such friendly terms with the traffic. I am sure that, if she loves him, she asks him no questions.

Here, I really must digress just enough to say that until women can be policemen, and can stand like magnificent statues in the turmoil of vehicles and direct the tumult with one finger — without a moment's confusion — not until then will I believe that they have been chosen by destiny to do man's work. Bless the policeman! May his wages be raised — he deserves it!

The temporary power of a cabman is often concentrated in a moment of intense anguish for his fare when, if a four-wheeler, he rolls off his box, stares at the money dropped into a very dirty paw, makes a speech which ranges from reproach to vituperation, and follows you until a beneficent front door closes on your anguish. He has it in his power to take the bloom from the smartest toilette.

There is no one in the whole range of civilisation who has such a power to inflict

humiliation on one as a cabman! He has that delicate perception that he knows just when his remarks will cut like a lash. He always grumbles on principle, and you would rather give him your whole fortune than have him make a spectacle of you before those other temporaries, the footmen. As if he didn't know it, and as if he didn't always choose the noblest of these as witnesses! You know that you have overpaid him, and so does he, but he follows you with running remarks, in the form of a soliloquy, which increase in virulence as you flee before him, and which produce that peculiar contortion of face in the well-bred footman, in which a grin battles with a countenance of stone.

Those awful footmen! I do believe that a cabby, in spite of his bad language, is sometimes the prey of softer emotions. One knows by observation that he often smokes a pipe, and from the way his chariot leans up against the pavement of the nearest saloon, out of which he comes with a frightfully red face and smacking his lips, one knows he is not a "bigoted" total abstainer. One even pictures him as re-

tired to a mews, and in that peaceful retreat, with the family washing flapping over his head, enjoying respite from timid fares in the bosom of his family.

There is a monumental prejudice against four-wheelers. It is even growing. Once I used to frolic about in them, flitting from one afternoon tea to the other; now when I ask for one it is, if possible, secretly, and always apologetically. Why is it? They cost nearly the same as hansoms, but why are they so plebeian? Even a 'bus is not so low. Servants respect you more even if they know that you get into a 'bus out of their sight than if they witness your downfall into a four-wheeler. Kings have driven in hansoms, and Cabinet Ministers have been tipped out of them; but who ever heard of a King or a Cabinet Minister driving in a "growler"?

Of course, a 'bus is low, but you need not say you came in one, only you must be careful! The other day old Lady Toppingham called and grew quite eloquent on the levelling influences of 'buses; they might do for cooks and tradespeople, she said, but her principles were such that she really couldn't

ride in one. All the time she was clutching a blue punched 'bus ticket on the top of her card-case with her relentless thumb. I agreed with her, and said that I also never could nor would, and no sooner had she gone than I was off to Whiteley's on top of a blue Kensington. Still, it is levelling, and you should always pick off the straws and never cling to the tickets.

However, the most ignoble conveyance is undoubtedly the "growler." To go in one to a smart afternoon reception requires courage. I shall never forget my last experience. It was an awful function, and both sides of the street were lined with private carriages, and a double row of footmen graced the *porte cochère*.

My four-wheeler was the only one in sight, and it was the forlornest of its kind. It shook like jelly and rattled like artillery. A burly being in sackcloth and dirt (instead of ashes) rolled off the box, and sixteen perfectly equipped footmen had their features set to a preparatory grin. I placed my foot on the dirtiest cab step in London, and from my white-gloved hand I dropped a liberal fare into a grimy paw. To the

joy of the attendant footmen the owner of the paw said the most appalling things. I stopped the hurricane with another shilling, and flew up the steps and took refuge in extra haughtiness, and overdid it!

I was thankful when I was ushered into the drawing-room and cooled off in the icy stare of the other guests — some thirty women and two men.

Nothing betrayed that I was a "growler" lady as I took the limp hand of my hostess, who favoured me with a speechless smile. This she temporarily detached from a superior man in superior garments, such as, to do them justice, Englishmen only know how to wear. He was very perfect, and in one of his blank eyes he wore a glass.

I don't know his name, but I shall never forget him. He was evidently one of the lilies of the field who only know of four-wheelers by hearsay. Whether our hostess stopped smiling long enough to murmur an introduction I do not know, but we were quite lost among the furniture, and as much thrown on each other's society as if we were on a desert island. So when he uttered inquiringly something that sounded like

"yum," I said desperately, knowing it could strike no answering chord, "I came in a four-wheeler; it requires a good deal of moral courage."

Then I stopped, blushing and embarrassed. How would he express his scorn! I stepped aside to give him a chance to vanish out of my plebeian neighbourhood; but, instead, said this gallant Englishman, bringing his eyeglass to bear on me, "Ow — ow — really? So did I. Never drive in anything else." Yes, there are heroes even in London drawing-rooms.

Has any one ever heard of a footman with wife and children? Can that cast-iron countenance ever unbend? Does that vacant look hide mighty thoughts, or does it hide nothing? Is a footman himself ever scorned? I do hope he is, for he has made me suffer so much. I have sometimes thought that if I owned a footman I should be too proud to live; yet on studying the faces of my fellow men so blessed, I find that they are not proud, but quite modest, and sometimes even shabby.

Yes, the owners of footmen are mostly less prosperous in appearance than their

servants, while the possessor of a butler and footmen galore looks quite poor. But I do wonder where footmen go when they are old? I never saw an old footman but once, and that was in a registry office, a dim sanctuary, dotted by desks and ornamented by agitated ladies.

The awful temporary power of registry office clerks, how they do make one quail! There was about the old footman a fictitious smartness, a youthfulness so out of keeping with his haggard face that it gave me a shock. For once I was sorry that the biter was bit, and that the stony-hearted clerk behind his desk imparted his wisdom with such brevity and disdain.

I shall never forget the insinuating wistfulness with which the old man leaned across the desk, and, gracefully using his well-brushed silk hat as shield, described how bad times were, and that he would be glad to take any place at all, at any wages; all he wanted was a home. He would even go into the country — even in the country! It was too pitiful, and my heart ached for him as I recognised in the shabby smartness of his well-fitting clothes

one who had "valeted" in higher spheres. By the way he held his top hat I saw how perfectly he had studied the outside of manners.

The cruelty of the beefy clerk was colossal. "We can't place old footmen, nobody wants 'em." He spoke like a machine. "But I'll take your name." The old man tripped out with a pathetic lightness as if to prove to us all by a sample how active his legs still were. So it seems that even the proudest footman should not be too proud.

I am not so afraid of butlers as I am of footmen. I have never met with an affable footman, but I have known one or two butlers who were quite fatherly. With one, in particular, I always long to shake hands. I admire his clothes so much. Never for an instant would any one take them for a gentleman's evening clothes. The magnificent girth of his ample tail coat shadows the most respectable of black trousers; they pretend to no higher sphere, but are perfect for the state of society in which they move. A rather fine head, like a respectable Roman Emperor's (if such a person-

age ever existed), completes an impressive personality.

I don't know what he thinks about me, but when he vouchsafes me something that is a smile and yet isn't a smile, I feel gratified. I always thought that his ancestors fought for my friends' ancestors in the battle of Agincourt, but, on inquiry, find he has been with them six months. The temporary owner of this great man is quite modest.

One of the funniest exhibitions of temporary power I once observed in America — in a church. Two of us had gone to hear a great American preacher, and we had been invited to sit in the pew of a friend, in a church to which we were strangers. We came early, and waited patiently just within the church door to be shown to the seat. Only a few stragglers had arrived, and all were waiting humbly for that important functionary — the sexton.

Now the American sexton — the verger — is a very mighty man indeed. Parsons come and go, but the sexton stays for ever. If he is not very tall and dignified in black broadcloth, he is generally fat and fussy in the same. He picks out waiting sinners and

seats them according to his boundless caprice. He knows just the kind of stray sinner who may be ushered into a charitable pew, and he knows the pews that decline to receive stray sinners under any consideration.

It is curious what courage it takes to penetrate into a strange pew; it is being a kind of Sabbath burglar. Never does a right-minded sexton usher an out-at-elbow sinner into the pew of the rich and great. That they are presumably addressing the same Divine Power is no reason. This explains the Roman Catholic hold on the people. If you are a Roman Catholic, you enter God's house and pray anywhere; but if you are a Protestant, what shy pauper would dare to stray into an expensive pew for a communion with his God?

My American sexton had, in the meantime, bustled down the centre aisle. He looked the little crowd over haughtily, and he refused to catch my wistful eye — my companion was getting very tired. At last I ventured, "Would you kindly show us to Judge ——'s pew?" "Can't now, I'm busy; my young men will come presently," and he darted off.

His young men did not come, and I looked vainly about for succour, for the pews were filling up. Suddenly the great swing-door at the entrance opened, and in came a tall commanding figure, a man of advanced years, whose name is a household word in the land, the great preacher himself. He pulled off his battered slouch hat, and I saw his kind, keen eyes as they rested on the white hair and tired face of my friend. "Why are you waiting here, what can I do for you?" he asked.

"We are waiting to be shown to Judge ——'s pew," I explained.

"I will show you, come with me." This he did, and left us the richer by the kindliest smile in the world.

Different countries, different exercise of temporary power. The English railway guard is not impressive nor much in evidence. The American railroad conductor, on the other hand, is a great man, but he exercises his power genially, and in the intervals of collecting tickets he is approachable. He generally takes up his abiding place at the end of one of the "cars," and puts his legs on the seat opposite and talks with a

much flattered chosen one. He sees a good deal of the world, not being shut into a cubby-hole like his English brother. In the course of years of travel along a particular route his popularity becomes so great that it culminates in gifts, and many a popular conductor blazes in the light of a huge diamond "bosom pin," or carries under his arm at night a gorgeous presentation lantern. No man is so great but he feels flattered at his notice, and he really is not very proud, considering, and his power is benign.

In England his namesake, the 'bus conductor, has often made me feel the blight of his authority. There was once a misanthrope who took to keeping a light-house; if I were a misanthrope I would become a 'bus conductor. It must, of course, be awfully irritating, that temporary support he gives to beautiful ladies as they topple off; but it is compensated for, to some extent, by wrenching the arms of the lovely creatures as he hauls them on the foot-board of the 'bus before it stops. This, they say, he does out of pure benevolence, so that the poor 'bus horses shall not have to start up the cumbersome machine unnecessarily. Still,

one ventures to ask if we poor women are not of as much consequence as a 'bus horse?

Last year a benevolent conductor nearly dislocated my arm as he pulled me up, and I ached for two months after. I protest against this misplaced tenderness! It is said that an Englishman may ill-treat his wife with more impunity than his dog, but I don't believe it. I am not afraid of the conductor unless I get in or out of his 'bus; but the haul he gives me in, which sends me reeling against the other passengers, and the pull he gives me out when I recline for a moment, without any gratitude, against his outstretched arm, makes him unpopular with me.

There is an American product which, with the American invasion, has, alas and alas! taken root here, and that is the American hotel clerk, real and imitated. He has come with the great caravanserais, and, like the American plumber, he is the target for American wit.

There is no doubt that it takes a cool and composed personality to "wrastle" with the travelling public, and yet the travelling

public is not half so terrible as the cool and composed hotel clerk. He has brought insolence to the level of a fine art, and as he is answerable only to a corporation, that means that he is answerable to no one. He always puts you into a room you don't want, and having no pecuniary interest in the matter, it is to him of no earthly consequence whether you stay or not.

Complain to him, and you complain to deaf ears. He apparently has nothing to do but to loll behind the office counter and improve his finger-nails. Tumultuous rings of various bells leave him unmoved; passionate telephonic appeals he only answers when he chooses. He turns to an agonised public a face like carved wax and eyes like agate, and it recoils. The parting of his hair is a monument to his industry.

When I call on a guest at a big hotel I deliver up my card with hope, because, as the poet rashly sang, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." Then I sit down and wait as near the office as possible, and wistfully watch the elegant leisure of the great man behind the counter. My card has disappeared in the custody of a small

boy with a salver, and the chances are that before I see him again he will be a man grown.

After having waited half an hour I venture to intrude on the peace behind the counter, and I am received with a *hauteur* which puts me in my right place at once. The guest, being merely a number, excites no earthly interest, but the clerk wearily sends another infant in search of the first, and then turns his immaculate back on me, and I am permitted to admire the shiny smoothness of his back hair. I again subside, and in my indignation I make up my mind to complain to the daily Press: Is thy servant a doormat that he should be so downtrodden?

Do not preach about the ancient tyrannies of kings and emperors, and other estimable folks, about whom history has probably told a good many lies, and to these add the further lie that I am happy because I am free and independent. I am not free and independent! Instead, I languish under the tyranny of a hundred thousand tyrants, before whom I grovel and quake. Several of them sleep on my top floor and treat me with much severity.

Instead of thousands of tyrants, give me, rather, one tyrant; I can accommodate existence to him, and it is distinctly more interesting and less complicated.

The problem of existence is its multitude of tyrants. Indeed, how delightful life would be if we were not so tyrannised over by the down-trodden!

The Extravagant Economy of Women

THE trouble with women is that they do not know how to spend money. The great majority never have any money, or they are at the mercy of some grim masculine creature, be he father or husband, who demands items—now think of an average man bothering himself about items! It must be a survival of the time when we inhabited harems, or when we were beautiful dames to whom our true knights gave undying love but nothing more substantial; or we rejoiced the souls of the ancient patriarchs though we did not succeed in extracting any cash.

I don't for a moment believe that the lovely Hebrew damsel, Rebecca, had a penny of her own, nor that the peerless Guinevere had half-a-crown (or whatever the coinage was) to buy her Launcelot a love token. And though Scheherazade—that peerless, self-contained, circulating

library of a thousand and one volumes — told enough stories to her Sultan to have made the fortune of a modern publisher, she could hardly have made less even if she had had the felicity to write a modern novel. The favourite of the harem would, it is certain, have found a purse a hollow mockery.

Now we modern women are the descendants, more or less remote, of Rebecca, Guinevere, and Scheherazade, and our greatest resemblance to our fair ancestresses is that most of us have no money to spend, and those of us who have do not know how to spend it. Heredity is an excuse for being what might be called the stingy sex.

What would the world have been like had the purse-strings of time been held by women? More comfortable, possibly, but, probably, much less beautiful. It takes the great, splendid masculine spendthrifts in high places to glorify the world with treasures of priceless art. But it was an immortal maiden queen who inspired the greatest poet of all time, and as the production of poetry has always been cheap, so poetry was the splendid and inexpensive contribution to

the glory of her reign made by a not too extravagant queen. It is the men who keep alive the extravagance, the beauty, and the ideality of life. But little credit to them who have always been able to put their hands in their trousers pockets and jingle the pennies.

Now time may mean money for men, but who ever heard that time meant money for women? No one, for the simple reason that it does not. Time and trouble are of so little value to the average woman that she squanders the one and is prodigal of the other in the most appalling way. And by the average woman, are meant all such who do not earn their own living, no matter how modestly; nor those who have some serious purpose in life, though without the object of earning; nor those who, as wives and mothers, may estimate their time as of the value of a general servant's. But apart from these the rank and file of women, consist of the aimless ones — and there are all sorts of aimless ones: rich and poor, high and low, — who potter vaguely through life, through shops, through streets, through joy, through sorrow; think feebly, talk feebly,

and feel feebly, and finally fade away, and cease to exist. Now think of the majority of men frittering away life like that!

For ten years I lived opposite an able-bodied, middle-aged woman who sat in a rocking-chair by the window, crocheting from luncheon time until dark, four mortal hours, and this for ten long years! Then she moved or died, I don't remember which. And yet, after all, how many of us sit with our hands folded, doing nothing, thinking nothing, but just mentally and physically limp, weighed down by empty, useless time, which we try to kill with yawning desperation.

We are adepts of the idle industries because our time is of no earthly consequence. Think of the miles of lace we crochet, the impossible embroideries we make, the countless odds and ends we construct, of no earthly use except to catch dust. Think of the hours we waste at the piano which no one wants to hear and which we never learn to play; think of the awful pictures we make, which no one wants to see; the innumerable things we do that are so much better done by some one

else. There may be male loafers, superabundant male loafers, but it seems to me as if their united numbers are as nothing compared to those worthy lady loafers who are perfectly respectable and perfectly idle. Why should a woman be permitted to loaf unreproved? Is idleness a feminine privilege?

The average man is trained to do some one thing as well as his intelligence and his industry will permit, but the average woman is trained to do nothing, at least nothing well — she cannot even keep house well. Her only object is to fill her aimless existence with something, anything, just to kill time.

In other days girls were carefully taught all domestic employments; they had to learn to keep house, to sew delicately, to cook, and, indeed, to do all those innumerable minor things which are of such vast importance. The modern girl is only taught not to be illiterate, that is all. With this negative quality as a dowry, a pretty face and nice clothes, and some empty chatter, she is bestowed on a perfectly innocent young man in search of a helpmate.

Perhaps for the first time she has a little money — I speak, of course, of the respectable middle-class woman, for the lowest and highest are of no account, meeting, as they often do, on the dead level of extravagance. Now what can we expect of a young middle-class wife who has some money for the first time? That she wastes it when it should be saved, and saves it when it should be spent. She buys cheap food, but she decorates her baby with that white plush cloak and that awful plush cap which her middle-class soul loves, and which bear witness to her prosperity. So her olive branch is carried about in plush while her husband has dismal retrospects of other days, hardly appreciated, when he took his luscious supper at a third-rate restaurant, which in remembrance seems a banquet fit for the gods.

To spend money in just proportion to one's income, however small, and not to spend too little — for there is such a thing! — requires a higher degree of intelligence than the aimless and the inexperienced possess, and the woman who earns money has a keener, juster knowledge of its value than

the woman who gets it from the masculine head of the family under whose thumb she languishes. Also, as I have said before, she has to learn the value of time in the process of evolution from the harem to the ballot-box.

I have a dear friend, a woman with a massive intellect, who is, however, not above economy. She has been in search of an ideal greengrocer, and, after much tribulation of spirit and waste of precious hours that mean literally pounds to her, she found him in Shepherd's Bush. Lured by the bucolic name, tempted by a vision of sprouts at "tuppence" per pound instead of "tuppence ha'penny," she made a pilgrimage there, wasted a whole precious morning, and joined a phalanx of other mistaken female economists who stood on wet flags in Indian file, each waiting her turn to be served. My intelligent friend waited twenty-five minutes, until she was finally rescued by a serving young man, and had the rapture of saving sevenpence.

She, naturally, returned home in triumph and in a 'bus, but she was so used up by her economy that it would have been flattery

to call her a wreck. That night she had a chill, the doctor was summoned in hot haste, and he proceeded to attend her with that assiduity which only adds another terror to illness. When to this is added the bills for a protracted visit to the seaside, my intelligent friend confessed that it hardly paid to save sevenpence.

Now is it not also the extravagance of pure economy that takes women to the "sales," where they buy all the things they do not want? Would there be sales-days if there were only men in the world? Did you ever see a man go from one shop to another to get a necktie "tuppence" cheaper? To be penny wise is indeed the supreme attribute of women! For the economical one it is a terrible ordeal to go shopping with a father or a brother; a lover is different, he is still full of temporary patience. But husbands and fathers have no patience.

"If you like it, take it, but don't waste people's time," says the irate man, as if there weren't innumerable steps to be taken after the initial process of liking.

"I think I can get it a little nicer at Smith's," you urge, while your dear one

looks at you cynically, for nicer means cheaper, and he knows it. "Come on then," and he bundles you into a cab, drives to Smith's, and lets the cab wait while you try to make up your mind. Those dreadful cabs, how they do make the economical woman suffer. Did you ever hear a woman declare that it is really cheaper in the end to take a cab? When does a woman ever think of the end? The average woman avoids a cab on principle. She feels it due to this same principle to draggle her skirts through the mud, to get her feet wet, and to come home an "object." But thank goodness, she has saved a cab fare, and you can get twelve quinine pills for tuppence.

Is it not also a part of our extravagant economy that makes women eat such queer things when they are by their lonely selves? What self-respecting man would lunch off a sultana cake, a tart, or an ice? Show me the self-respecting woman who has not done it! Women know how to cook — some of them — but none of them know how to eat. A woman feels that to eat well and substantially is a sheer waste; there is nothing to show for it, but she would

not hesitate a moment to spend even more in something that she can show. A man doesn't think twice about having a "ripping" good dinner and a bottle of extra good wine; he thinks it is money well spent, but he will be hanged before he would buy himself an ornamental waistcoat and sustain life on a penny bun.

What awful things we should eat if it were not for men! I am sure *table d'hôte* dinners were invented by some philanthropist to save women. "I cannot eat *à la carte*," said a friend of mine in a piteous burst of confidence: "its just like eating money." So when her husband travels with her he always leads her to the *table d'hôte* if only to preserve her from starvation. When she is resigned to the cost, she has an excellent appetite. I really think if it were not for men women would wrap themselves in sable and point lace and starve to death.

Is it not the woman who is the apostle of appearances? Go to a dinner party where the wines and the food are rather poor and well served, and you may be sure it is the fault of the dear female economist at the head of the table.

Who of us has not come across a gorgeous establishment where it takes three footmen and a butler to serve a tough chop of New Zealand lamb. The presiding goddess afterwards drives out in the park in an equipage magnificent with coachman and footman, and horses shining like satin with care and good feeding. No, they are not fed on New Zealand lamb!

For some people it is a wildly extravagant economy to ride in a 'bus. I know of a family of girls who pine for a 'bus ride as we poor things do for a chariot and four. They can't afford it; it would ruin the family credit, which is only kept up by a magnificent carriage — unpaid for — and a superb coachman and footman whose wages are owing. If one of these girls were to be seen in a 'bus, it would mean their downfall in the eyes of the confiding tradesmen. No, not everybody can afford to ride in a 'bus. After all it is only the rich and great the world permits to be shabby.

I heard of a nice girl who "slums" and who lives in the East End, having shaken the dust of Mayfair from her feet. She has reduced self-sacrifice to a science, and her

life is an orgie of self-denial, and she is a hollow-eyed, haggard young martyr, and keeps body and soul together on five shillings a week. My only criticism of this scheme of altruism is that every once in a while she neglects and starves herself into an awful fit of illness, and has to be taken back to Mayfair and brought to life, and then the good physician sends a thumping big bill to her parents, who never get any credit for charity. Now I think even a modern martyr ought to have just a grain of common sense.

There is a certain intellectual town in America where tramcars still issue return tickets at reduced rates. How well I remember two dear maiden ladies, armed with principles, walking up and down in the snow and sleet of a winter's night one whole hour waiting for the particular tram which would accept their tickets. They let unnumbered other trams jingle merrily past, while they paddled about in the slush, strong in their sense of economy. They each saved three cents, and one nearly died of pneumonia.

One wonders how many of us die because of our reckless economy? Are we not for

ever doing things for which we have neither the strength nor the capacity, just to save a few pennies, and do not many of us repent all our life long? I well remember a lady who to save hiring a man, lifted her piano to slip a rug under. When I saw her, she had, in consequence, been a helpless invalid for years with an incurable spine complaint.

Are not cheap servants another favourite female economy? I have seen a sensible woman rejoice because she had captured a cheap servant as if, what with aggravation of spirits and broken crockery, a cheap servant does not take it out of one in nervous prostration. Not to mention that the incompetent eat just as much as the competent!

Did I not read this very day how two delightful female economists, waiting for the opening of a certain theatre, sat on camp-stools from nine in the morning till seven in the evening of a cold, damp winter day for a chance to dive into the pit, and so to save a shilling or two. Was there ever a more cheering example of feminine wisdom and thrift?

I knew a woman who had the economical fad to get double service out of a match, but she found it awfully expensive. She went upstairs one night to dress for dinner. A doorway, hung with a frail, floppy art-curtain, connected her bedroom and her dressing-room. As she entered, she heard shrieks of "fire" in the street, and tearing open the window she found the house opposite in flames, and in an instant fire-engines came clattering through the crowd. She was a kind soul, but she did enjoy herself immensely, watching it comfortably from her window. It was over in no time, and as she looked at the chaos of fire-engines and firemen the thought struck her how convenient it would be if there were another fire just then in the street, for here they all were ready to put it out!

Whereupon she lighted the gas, and, true to her principles, carried the burning match to her dressing-room, through the floppy art-curtain. The next instant it was all in a blaze, and she was hanging out of the window shrieking "fire." They broke down her front door, trailed miles of dirty oozing hose upstairs, and finally left her gazing

drearily at the black ceiling, the sodden furniture, the dirty water pouring downstairs, and a hideous burnt wall where the fatal art-curtain had been.

"At any rate," she said to herself, as she took a great, long breath, "it was convenient."

But since then she has never used a match twice.

How we all do love to save at the spiggot even if it does pour out at the bung-hole! Who of us has not seen a woman grow thin and sharp and old, in the struggle to save pennies while her open-handed husband throws away pounds? It takes a big, broad minded woman to know when to open her purse-strings, and perhaps even a bigger and more strong-minded one to keep them always comfortably ajar.

At what early age can the girl-child be taught that what is too cheap is usually very dear? The majority of women never learn it. How many a woman goes out to buy a warm woollen frock and returns home with a be-chiffoned tissue-paper silk, because it was cheap and looked so "smart." That ghastly, temporary smartness which is a

kind of whited sepulchre! There is no doubt that the Englishwomen — and I include the Americans — are the most extravagant in the world.

A Frenchwoman once expressed her amazement to me at the enormous amount of money Englishwomen spend on what is as useless as froth. Chiffon is the bane of the Englishwoman; she drapes herself in cheap chiffons while a Frenchwoman puts her money in a bit of good lace. She adorns herself with poor furs where a Frenchwoman would buy herself a little thing, but a good little thing. Finally, when the thrifty Frenchwoman has gathered together quite a nice collection of lace and fur, the Englishwoman has nothing to show for her money but a mass of torn and dirty chiffon whose destination is the rag-bag. After all it is an age of wax beads and imitation lace, and they represent as well as anything our extravagant economy.

Is not our middle-class cooking a monument to our extravagance? A British housewife has it in her power to take away the stoutest appetite with her respectable joint, her watery vegetable, and the pudding or

tart that should lie as heavy on her conscience as they do on the stomach. If the Englishwoman would only take to the chiffons of cooking instead of the chiffons of clothes! It is an extravagance to cook badly; it is an extravagance to buy things because they are cheap; it is an extravagance to waste time in doing what someone else can do better (if one can afford it). After all it is only fair to employ others when one has the means. Don't we all want to live? Suppose editors wrote the whole contents of their papers, and publishers only published their own immortal works! What then?

The other day I had to buy some china to replace what had been broken. "They break it so quickly," I said to the polite salesman, in a burst of grief. "But if they didn't, what should we do?" he asked. It really had not occurred to me before, so a polite salesman taught me a lesson.

It belongs to the economy of the universe that neither we nor anything else should last for ever. Nature herself is methodically economical, witness the regular passing of the seasons. And does she not utilise one in the making of the next?

Yes, what we women need most of all is to be taught unextravagant economy, which includes the value both of money and of time, for the day is coming when women's time will really be worth something. Probably it will work a political economical revolution, but that cannot be helped, and, after all, the world's progress is punctuated by revolutions. If women enter men's sphere, the men will have to do something else. Still, women are barred by their very weakness from innumerable employments, and though they demand to vote, one never hears a very enthusiastic plea on their part to fight.

So let women earn, or at all events let them be given money as a right and not as a begrudged charity, and it will be cheaper for men in the end, with the result that our economy will become less irresponsibly extravagant. Possibly we will not save much, but we may live better, and, joy of joys, the doctors' bills will undoubtedly grow beautifully less, for I am sure that the immense prosperity of that learned and disinterested profession is mainly due to our extravagant economy.

A Modern Tendency

WHERE are the aged gone? At any rate the aged women? The fact is, there are no aged women; for, behold! the hair-dresser, the milliner and the dressmaker have all decreed that there shall be no old age — and, lo! the miracle is performed; and our venerable grandmothers who once were old are now only strenuous copies, perhaps a trifle overdone, of our more or less youthful selves.

Who has not been told that she looks most lovely in a hat in which her last grain of common sense must clamour aloud that she really looks like a fright? Have not each of us, my suffering sisters, had relays of awful hats tried on our unoffending heads till we look like tortured ghosts, crowned by a wreath of roses or cabbages, and loomed over by a terrible young person in black satin? How that young person — well — prevaricated, and how the cold irony of her eye cut us to the quick!

I am dreadfully afraid to say so, but there are no serving young ladies who are so cruel as the milliners' young ladies. They are of course not all perfectly beautiful, but their wonderful tresses are always built up in such an artful way that they never fail to nestle in the nooks and crevices of the most unearthly creations. But they always say "It just suits Madam," even when they cannot possibly reconcile it to their conscience!

One asks why do all the big shops employ, for the destruction of the public, those tall sylph-like creatures who float about like denizens of a higher sphere, in their wonderful black satins. These satin robes have such an air that the white pins which occasionally hold together a rip look only like an eccentric ornament. The divine lengths of those graceful figures!

They are a serious unbending race to whom all things are becoming. So when they trail up and down what may be termed the trial halls of fashion to show off to a short, stout customer a garment to which she mistakenly aspires, no wonder that, struck by a temporary insanity, she succumbs. She

is convinced that her five feet by an equal breadth will look like a five-foot ten inches, which is, besides, so attenuated that it is a problem how the young person can dispose of anything even so ethereal as a penny bun. Why not be merciful and employ a dumpy lot for dumpy customers!

It is a terrible thing in these days that there is no growing old. No happy time comes when the tired features are at liberty to sink into comfortable wrinkles, and nobody cares. The supreme joy of taking one's well-earned rest saying, "Behold, I am old! Age also has its beauties and compensations." The trouble is that nobody really believes it to be a joy.

There is probably no parting so painful as the parting from the days of one's youth; even if the outside be ever so youthful there is a knell in one's heart that tolls to the burial. One of the surest signs of age is when one begins to think of the past. Youth dreams of the future, middle age lives in the present, but old age dreams of the past. But whoever acknowledges dreaming of the past now that old age is out of fashion!

The Champagne Standard

Years and years ago, when our mothers were very young, there was a distinct fashion for elderly people; certain colours were sacred to them, certain fashions, certain fabrics and certain jewels. What young creature would have foolishly decked herself in either purple or yellow? Youth rejoicing in sparkling eyes, resigned diamonds to its elders, and all aglow with hope and illusions left point lace to deck the stately shoulders of age along with velvet.

Now fashion is a republic and the only arbiter is a bank balance or credit, and young things frisk it in diamonds, velvet, point lace and sables, and their old grandmothers shiver along in *mousseline de soie* and chiffon, roses wreathe their golden locks, red locks, black locks, as the case may be, but never their grey locks, and the winds of heaven fan their ageing shoulder-blades. The art of growing old gracefully is so rare that no wonder we cling to the hairdresser and the dressmaker with pathetic hands, just to postpone the evil hour; sometimes we think we have escaped the evil hour altogether. How we do cheat ourselves!

It is perhaps one of the most blessed dispensations of our frail human nature that we do not really know how we look; that when we gaze into a mirror we do not see the sober disillusioning reflection, but rather some fondly imagined image of ourselves. No woman is heroic enough to look her imperfections squarely in the face, or why do we see such curious apparitions? Why does that worn old face hide behind that white veil dotted with black? Because, when she sees her mistaken old features in the glass, then she sees what she longs to see, and when her old heart cannot pump up sufficient pink she dabs on that ghastly rose which has never yet deceived anyone.

Ah, yes, the twentieth century is distinctly reserved for youth — old age is not in it! It is a bad fashion set by that spoilt child of the world — America. The world pays the same deference to America that the average American parent pays to his obstreperous child. Yes, the American child rules the roost, and America rules the world; therefore, what wonder that age grows more and more unpopular.

The other day I saw in several papers

that in a certain industry no workman would be employed in future who was more than forty. Put yourself in the place of a man of forty who is shelved and knows of no other way of earning his living! If he becomes a criminal, who can blame him? Recently I read a curious paragraph about the increasing use of hair-dye among working men. Not beer and tobacco, mind you, but just hair-dye! Why? Because employers do not want old workmen. So the men ward off the crime of growing old with hair-dye. Was there ever a more comic tragedy?

Alas! the world clamours for youth. White hairs compel no reverence. Age only suggests to brisk young things that the old people are not up with the times. What wonder, then, that the world caters for youth, and nobody takes the trouble any more to create fashions for old ladies?

If there is an institution which more than others wards off the coming of age, it is certainly the great shops. Twice a year these arbiters of fashion sacrifice themselves for the good of the public. Then do they guilelessly re-mark the treasures

of their warehouses with those tempting signs which produce on the British public the effect of *hasheesh* on the native of India. Beware of those peaceful and alluring pirates of Oxford and Regent Streets, O frail women who draggle last year's chiffons in this year's mud, and go to the greengrocers in the shop-worn glory of the year before last. During sale-days the British matron lives in a state of ecstasy. To buy is bliss; to buy cheap is rapture. Cotton laces intoxicate her, and so does chiffon. She buys summer dresses in winter, and furs when the July sun bakes the sweltering town. That nothing is of any earthly use is of no consequence. Nor is it of consequence that what she buys is youthful, and she is old. It is these enchanting sale-days that explain the Englishwoman's orgies of wax beads, picture hats, party frocks at the wrong time, paper-soled slippers and open-worked stockings in pouring rain.

"A strong race, these English," an envious American said to me the other day.

"That's because they kill the weak ones off," I explained. "To be a perfect Englishwoman you must be able to sit with

your poor bare shoulders against an open window at a winter dinner-party, preferably in an icy draught, and you must smile. If you can survive that you are one of the elect. It ensures you a social position, because you cannot have a social position in England if you cover up your shoulders."

I wish I could offer up an earnest plea for covered shoulders, at least for the aged! It seems to me when a brave woman has imperilled her life for forty years, nobly defying the cold blasts on the wrong side of the dining-table, and after she has got her young brood safely married, it does seem as if she then might retire to the well-earned comfort of a high dress without losing her position in society. But to cover up those poor melancholy shoulders is to announce the oldest kind of old age, and what woman has the courage for that?

There is no doubt that old age first went out of fashion when the bicycle came in, for age was no barrier to its keen enjoyment. But grandmother could not bicycle in a cap, and so she put on a billycock hat instead; necessity obliged her to show her ankles, and exhilaration led her to "scorch." It

was then we asked in some perplexity for the first time, "Where have the aged gone?"

Still let us cling to youth, it is our modern prerogative as women; but only let us cling to it to a certain extent — to the extent that life amuses, but does not hurt. There are some of us who still have emotions at an age when, had we lived in our grandmothers' day, we should already have found permanent refuge in big frilled caps. We hardly realise the safeguard there was in a cap. It was the final chord to show that the symphony of youth had come to an end.

In the days of our grandparents it was the men who kept young, while the women were old at thirty-five; but in these days men are considered old in their prime, and it is the women who cling to eternal youth. Yes, indeed, the modern tendency requires readjustment. But after all, does it pay to try and keep young when one is really tired and scant of breath?

Let it go, even the loveliest youth, in its own good time. Have we not each had our turn at it? But one thing there is to which we should all cling with might and

main, and that is a young heart, for a young heart has the only youth which is immortal. It will make of any woman, when the time comes, what is more rare and lovely than a young beauty, it will make her a charming old woman — and nothing in this wide world can be more charming, even if it is a little out of fashion.

A Plea for Women Architects

NOW that it is the fashion, as well as the necessity, for women to earn their own living, and when they are crowding into all the employments hitherto sacred to men (and in some of which they are exceedingly out of place) one wonders that they so rarely take to a profession — or, rather, to one branch of it — which seems so distinctly adapted to their characteristic talents; and that is domestic architecture.

The longer I live in England the more I am struck by the singular inconvenience of the average English house; its supreme aim seems to be to make the occupier as uncomfortable as possible. I do not, of course, speak of palaces which rejoice in a majestic dreariness, nor of the homes of the brand-new rich, who, being unencumbered by ancestors or ancestral castles, can start fresh with all the newest improvements, so new, indeed, that they are still quite sticky with varnish. I speak of the average per-

son, who has a moderate income, and who, without pretension, would yet like to get the most comfort out of life.

I am well aware that when it comes to a consideration of the defects of English architecture I shall be completely crushed by a reference to English cathedrals, to which the American makes adoring pilgrimages. It is true they are glorious. We do not live in cathedrals, however, but in houses, and the English houses are far, far behind the English cathedrals.

In America we are on the high road to perfection in domestic architecture, owing, possibly, to the acknowledged supremacy of our women. Where a woman reigns supreme, it is the end and aim of her men to make her comfortable and happy. Now the American architect, being a man, and belonging most likely to some woman, makes it his pride to provide for her — or her sex which she represents — the most comfortable, convenient and pretty house to adorn with her taste and her presence until she moves. We have no legacies of famous cathedrals; but, O! we do have absolute comfort in our houses!

A woman is not wasteful in small things, but a man is; who then is so adapted to utilise the small space which constitutes the average house? A house can be the visible expression of all her cleverness, her economy, her taste and her common sense; it will give her an opportunity to be great in the minor aspirations. Possibly she might fail if she tried to build a cathedral — as she has failed in the highest expression of any of the arts — but she is undoubtedly created to bring that into the world which stands for comfort and for happiness, and where can she so fully prove her homely genius as at her own fireside?

Ah me, the fireside reminds me of how one shivers through an English winter! A man does not realise how terribly cold a woman can be, a mere man architect who rushes about all day long with twice as much clothing on as the average woman wears, and who, besides, never undergoes the ordeal of a low-necked dress!

It really would seem as if the male architect of houses can only construct the obvious; his imagination declines to soar. If he is an Englishman he firmly believes in the

methods of his ancestors more or less remote, and that explains why the Victorian house with all its bad taste, and inconvenience still remains the popular town dwelling-place. So common is it, that an enterprising burglar having "burgled" one, can find his way safely over half the houses of London, and be positively bored by their monotony! Now these houses are the creations of men architects, who have seen nothing else, and who lack that architectural intuition which can make them evolve what they have never seen, and enables them to immortalise in brick and mortar the vagaries of a dream.

Therefore it is high time for women to come to the front! A woman has intuitions, and when she really doesn't know it is her proud boast that she can guess, and, surely, that does quite as well. When she builds a house she will feel it, as a poet does his poem. She will put herself in the place of that other woman whose destiny it is to live there. She will create for her all the delightful things she wants herself. She will warm that house comfortably, because she herself hates to shiver. She will put in plenty of cupboards, because without cupboards life

is not worth living (to a woman)! Her kitchen will be in just proportion to the size of the house, and not a kind of baronial hall in which even the beetles look lonely. Having pity on mere human legs she will cease to build Towers of Babel.

Then, her genius being for detail, she will see that the interior work of the house is well and delicately finished. What impresses me most in comparing the work of an English and an American workman is that the American is more careful and deft. He leaves no dabs of paint, or seams of coarse cement. The Englishman is distinctly clumsier in his methods and his results.

The woman architect will pay especial attention to the plumbing, not only to its sanitary, but also to its ornamental aspect, which leaves much to be desired. And she will, if it is humanly possible, construct a bathroom for those of the household who need it most — the servants; and when she has done all this, then she has only done what is common in American houses built for families of comfortable, but not large incomes.

Further, the woman architect will study the economical use of electricity. She will not (being a woman) waste it by putting too much of it in impossible and unbecoming places, and yet at the same time she will know just where to place an artful lamp so that her long-suffering sister will at last be able to see, even at night, how her dress hangs. She will not be extravagant; for extravagance she leaves to her brother architects, who understand neither the value of space nor the wise economy of exertion. For this reason I urge that women should become architects, but only domestic architects. They must not meddle with cathedrals!

The more comfortable and convenient the houses are the more pleasant the daily life, and what that means as an influence on the temper of a nation cannot be overestimated. It may do for peace what the Hague Conference has so magnificently failed to do. So we shall inevitably become a better and happier people when the minor problems of life are solved once for all: the carrying of coal upstairs; the freezing in winter, because the heating methods are

inadequate; and the shielding of one's wardrobe from the festive moth in a space already overflowing with other garments.

No, women should never build cathedrals; but I am quite sure it is their destiny to build what is possibly of even greater importance, and that is the homes of the people.

The Electric Age

THE American contribution to the characteristics of nations is hurry, and it is so contagious that the whole world has caught the infection — the whole world is in a hurry!

The modern man has as much emotion and variety crammed into a year of his life as would have sufficed to leaven generations of lives two hundred years ago. Now as we can only eat so much with comfort, in the same way our brains will only assimilate so many impressions, and our hearts will only bear a certain amount of emotion. If we have too many impressions we go mad, and if our hearts are too full they break, only we are told there is no such thing as a broken heart. But there is.

It goes without saying that impressions, both on the heart and the brain, which are as rapid and broken as the biograph, must be of infinitesimal duration. It is therefore a foregone conclusion that the modern man is not only in a perpetual hurry from his

cradle to that final rest where all hurry ceases, but his memory, being limited to a certain number of photographic plates, while the impressions are unlimited, has but an infinitesimal space for each. The appeals made to our understanding in those limited years we call a lifetime are simply maddening. We have the entire daily history of the world dished up hot for a ha'penny innumerable times a day, and when it is a day old it is ancient history fit only to do up bundles with or light the fire.

It is perhaps not one of the least terrors of life that the world is growing so small, cruelly linked together by the copper coils of the cable, that before long there will not be left a nook or cranny where the soul can escape to solitude. There will be nothing left to discover in this little world, and if the astronomers do not come to our aid where will the outlet be for eager adventurers?

The world expects so infinitely much, that what constituted a great explorer fifty years ago and set the world talking, is the common experience of numberless young fellows, with much money and leisure, who go to darkest Africa in search of big game,

and hardly think it worth while to mention it.

Everybody does something; the world is on a tiresome level of universal ability! Everybody writes books: whether they are read is a secret no publisher will disclose. Art is pursued with frantic haste, but is being rapidly overtaken by the biograph. Music stuns the air and machine music proves its superior ability, and in the United States education has developed into a kind of decorous mental orgie. Even religion we get in a rush when, as a stray sinner, we wander into a hall and are tossed into a possible harbour on the crest of a rollicking hymn. Peace to the soul that finds a harbour, however gained, only the fact remains that it is often gained in a desperate hurry.

Statistics prove, we are told, that human life is longer now than in the past, what with the new hygiene and better nourishment; and yet the working days of a man's life have so pitifully shrunk together that a man of forty is shelved in these electric days as he once was at sixty. No wonder then that the world is in a tearing haste, seeing how soon a man gets over his practical use-

fulness, which means how soon he gets to the end of his life, for life is work; after that it does not count.

It is the new creed, and it comes from America along with the hurry. It is the creed of a people who in their mad haste are losing their sense of humour, for if a man has a touch of humour certain phases of American life must, in the vernacular, "tickle him to death."

Minerva is undoubtedly the patron goddess of America; did she not spring full panoplied from the head of Jove? She took no time to be born; she had no leisure for celestial teething nor whooping-cough. Education, under her fostering care, does not come by degrees.

Yesterday the great grubbing material city was intellectually a desert; to-day it possesses a university in full swing, endowed with millions, boasting the last "cry" of the most modern of brains. Hastily elbowing its way along the path which the old universities trod in impressive silence for centuries, it arrives shoulder to shoulder with them, still rather fresh in the way of varnish because it is so new, breathing hard

because of the speed, and wanting only what is, of course, of no earthly consequence — tradition and the memory of what was both good and great. This seems to be the only thing with which a university cannot be endowed!

All over the States universities spring up like magnificent mushrooms — over-night — and what with the men's universities, the women's colleges, university extension lectures and Chautauqua, not to mention educational schemes of a more modest nature, the United States may be said to be getting educated by electricity.

It takes a stranger in America some time to get accustomed to the mental pace. I shall never forget the German director of a rather famous Art museum there, who came to us in a towering rage and blurted out his indignation. He had been in America only a few months and the sober methods of the Fatherland still clung to him.

"These Americans, O these Americans!" and he tore his long hair. "I haf a letter this morning from a young man, and he ask me — Gott im Himmel, is it conceivable? — he ask me can I — I — I — what

you call it? — guarantee — that he can became a portrait painter in three months! It is to grow mad!"

But not only the Fine Arts. A young doctor was explaining to me how thorough and broad his medical education had been (he was from the West), and as impressive and conclusive evidence he added, "I've even taken an extra term on the eye." Now a term is three months.

Alas, it is all owing to the electric age. Why will inventors invent so many time and labour-saving machines? Heaven forgive them! The more intelligent the machine the more machine-like the man who runs it, or is run by it, if the work it leaves him to do is limited and monotonous. Inevitably his outlook on life must become very narrow, and he must lose all ambition, all sense of mental responsibility. Think of spending the days of one's life making eyelet-holes! Many people do.

What good is all this deadly haste to the world? What real good is it doing the labourers and the lower middle-class men, of whom the world mostly consists, if cables and wireless telegraphy make them, so to

speak, the next-door neighbours of an estimable yellow man in China? What help to them if they know the daily tragedies of the uttermost corners of the earth the same day rather than never? What use to them the knowledge of how to murder their fellow men scientifically in a war with all the modern improvements? What help to them if a million inventions make their patient hands useless, but provide them with luxuries they cannot afford?

Every day thousands of new companies are promoted to exploit inventions that have for their end and aim the doing of something in the greatest possible hurry with the least possible aid from mere men. Some day the lower classes will become perfectly unnecessary, like 'bus horses. The world will then be full of the only people who really count, and who can afford to be in a hurry: kings and queens, the rich and great, and above all, those golden calves the world worships, who rule the trusts, who in turn rule and ruin the world.

The question is, will the world be as well off if it has reached the summit and apex of hurry? In those days there will be no

more contentment, for the electric age is, of all things, the enemy of contentment. Yes, by that time the whole world will be discontented, and the universal characteristic of nations will be that they are tired — tired — tired. Then, of course, men will die in their early youth, worn out and old, for, after all, they are only men and not gods. Besides, have not the gods always had a bad reputation for jealousy, and have they not always punished the presumptuous mortals who tried to steal their divine fire?

Even the Electric Age cannot escape its Nemesis.

Gunpowder or Toothpowder

WHY are the English, admittedly the apostles of the tub, so indifferent, as a rule, to the condition of their teeth? If they would do only an infinitesimal bit as much for their preservation as they do for the preservation of their monuments, it might possibly have a momentous influence on English history.

Why the inside of a man's mouth should be of no importance compared to his outer man is a riddle; but so it is, and a man who would feel quite disgraced to be seen with dirty hands, leaves his teeth in a condition which is quite appalling. If, as it is said, bad teeth are a sign of the degeneracy of a race, then are the sturdy English in a very bad way, and melancholy indeed is their deterioration since the days of their ancestors of that prehistoric age whose relics are found in Cornwall and Somerset.

It is a comfort to learn that not only common sense, but vanity, is as old as the hills,

for among those ancient remains were found some rouge, and a mirror, all of which can be verified in the museum at Glastonbury. My heart went out to the prehistoric lady who used the rouge; it brought her very near with its suggestion of frailty and feminine vanity, and I am quite sure that the mirror as well was her property. I lingered over the rouge, the mirror, a tooth, a prehistoric safety-pin, and some needles, and let the others bother themselves about such really unimportant details as weapons and utensils. As I strolled on I saw a skull two thousand years older than any recorded history, and it grinned cheerfully at me with as perfect a set of teeth as ever rejoiced the heart of a dentist. I could not help thinking what a shabby exhibition we should make in similiar circumstances!

There is no doubt that our over-civilisation deteriorates our teeth, which is proved whenever prehistoric remains are discovered. The last were, I believe, found in Cornwall by a lucky man who bought a strip of land, or, properly, sand, on which to build himself a cottage, and, on proceeding to dig a cellar, found it already occupied by the

remains of prehistoric human beings. Some of the skeletons were still in the same curious attitude in which they had been buried, and the superior ones among them (socially!) had the right sides of their skulls smashed in to prevent the restless spirit from seeking re-admittance.

It was the most melancholy sight in the world, these bones which even the alchemy of thousands of years had not resolved into merciful dust. The immortal skeleton was there nearly intact, while brilliant, as if brushed that very morning, grinned those splendid prehistoric teeth, white as the kernel of a nut, impervious to decay.

A big glass case against the wall of the little museum, which has been built on the spot by the fortunate discoverer of the "bones," was full of carefully preserved teeth which had been found there, and their beauty and perfection would have rejoiced the heart of that artist in teeth *par excellence*, the American dentist.

The room was crowded by middle-class excursionists, who, with a middle-class joy of horrors, even if prehistoric, in default of anything fresher, stared round-eyed at the

skeletons, skulls, shinbones and other impedimenta of decease, and I was struck by the solemnity and dignity of those poor old bones compared to the commonplaceness of the empty faces gazing at them.

"Oh, I say, don't you wish you had them teeth," I heard a young thing in a scarlet tam o'shanter and a fringe giggle to the youth by her side, with an imitation panama tilted back from his receding forehead. I understood the gentle innuendo, as he promptly stuck his cane into his mouth and sucked.

There was something very magnificent and tragic in those lonely graves of a humanity, already extinct when ancient history began, resting under the roll of the Cornish sand dunes, where the sullen cliffs stand sentinels against the seas. Until the twentieth century they had rested forgotten, and then an undignified chance betrayed them.

It was a gold mine for the enterprising proprietor, whose moderate charge for a sight is only threepence a head. He is a man of engaging humour, and he is not only on intimate terms with his "bones," but with the eminent scientists who still wage a

bitter but bloodless feud over the remains, whose biography so far is only written in sand.

That he is not only a cheerful but a witty man is greatly to his credit, for he lives a lonely life on his sand hills, with only the cliffs as his neighbours and the roar of the ocean and the whistle of the wind to break the silence. For labour he excavates his graveyard, and for relaxation he catalogues his bones. His free and easy comments on his subject (or subjects, rather) are really very exhilarating to the philosophic tourist, and indeed it was he who first drew my attention to the deterioration of English teeth.

The eccentricity of the Early Victorian teeth was for decades the pet subject of the Continental caricaturist, the peculiarity being generally ascribed to the British female, her male companion merely rejoicing in hideous plaids, abnormal side-whiskers, and a fearful helmet decorated with a flowing puggaree. Times have changed. The British teeth have ceased to protrude, and, indeed, they now veer around to the other extreme, and instead of prominent front

teeth the Englishman now often rejoices in no front teeth at all, or between none and the ordinary number nature intends there are countless variations.

I have been waiting for a genial caricaturist to seize on this simple and unostentatious national trait. If bad teeth are a common sign of ill-health, then alas for the English masses who form the strength of the nation, for their neglected teeth are a menace and a warning.

There is no emotion in the world, except the fear of death, that will not succumb to an aching tooth. A villain with the toothache is more villainous than without it; while a lover with the toothache does not exist, for a lover with the toothache ceases to be a lover. The toothache is so exquisite a pain that it demands the undivided attention of the brain, with a persistency so nagging that no other pain enjoys. It will even wreck a man's career. What man can write a great poem or win a battle with an ulcerated tooth tearing at his nerves! Should we investigate, it will be discovered that the greatest men in the world who made history, art, and science, never had toothache, which first

of all kills the imagination. Mathematicians might survive, for such imagination as they have is riveted in facts.

In addition to the other disabilities, toothache is undignified; there is nothing interesting or romantic about it! It is one of the first pains impartial nature bestows on her children, and which is the only common heritage that justifies that misleading clause in the American Constitution that all men are born free and equal. That pain and what was in our childhood euphoniously called "tummy ache" lead the revolt in nurseries.

There is hardly a bodily ache which literature has not idealised, but an aching tooth has yet to find its dramatic poet. In fact, there is about it a touch of the ludicrous which its concentrated anguish does not justify. It is curious that so intense a suffering should be so undramatic, but it is the one agony which does not desert us this side of the grave, and which even the genius of a Shakespeare would hesitate to bestow on his hero or heroine. Anguish comes to them in many ways, but the great poet discreetly avoids teeth.

The only historical reference to teeth I have ever noticed is when the sacred Inquisition, always original and playful, tears them one by one out of the mouths of heretics and Jews as being gently conducive to confession. But even this undoubted torture is singularly undramatic, and has, I believe, never been used by a tragic poet.

It is one of the aggravations of toothache that it inspires but lukewarm sympathy; even your parents know you will not die of it. The greatest concession to your suffering is that you may stay away from school, and, if you are very bad, mother ties a big handkerchief about your face, which is something, but not much. But even parents are strangely inconsiderate, and I realised even in my infant days that had these same sufferings been situated more favourably in my body I should have been promoted to bed and the family doctor.

A very famous American dentist met the English husband of an American friend of mine with the genial congratulation, "My dear sir, I wish you joy! You have married a first-rate, A1 set of teeth."

Possibly the tribute was too professional,

but it really meant so much. Indeed, one of the most promising signs of the future of the American people is the importance they attach to good teeth. The American dentist is the greatest in the world. His deft skill constructs those delicate and complicated instruments that help him to repair the ravages of time and ill-health. Not only does he produce an exact copy of nature, but his is the only instance known to science where human ingenuity excels nature's — his teeth do not ache! It is also required of the modern dentist not only that he should be a consummate mechanic, but he must be a doctor and surgeon as well, to be able to cure the cause behind the damage.

When I see so many people here who have bad teeth — which to say the least is a blemish — it is a prophecy that the next generation will have even worse, which means a deterioration in health, therefore in intelligence and ambition. So in due course England will lose her proud position as the greatest nation in the world, simply because England would not go to the dentist; which is a curious neglect for a people

whose morning tub is much less likely to be neglected than their morning prayers.

If I were one of the powers that be I should require all Board Schools to furnish their pupils with tooth-brushes and tooth-powder, and the morning session should be opened with a general brushing of teeth. Not only that, but I would have a dentist attached to each school district, whose duty it should be to attend to the children's teeth free of charge. If England wants good war material (and there has been some adverse criticism of the quality of her soldiers) she must cultivate it, and it is her duty to step in where the parent fails. A day labourer with a large family does his best if he and they keep body and soul together. It is for the State to step in and rescue the young teeth from premature decay, thus undoubtedly increasing the health of the growing body, and at the same time teaching the young things those cleanly habits which make for self-respect and health.

The English have not the habit of going to the dentist; money paid to him they consider wasted — there is nothing to show for it. It is like putting new drains into the

house, only not so necessary. They still have teeth taken out rather than stopped (filled), as being cheaper, and when they are all out they replace them on too slight a provocation by what American humour calls "store teeth."

Nor are the English supersensitive. Their complacency, which upholds them in more important things, inclines them to believe that if their fathers muddled along with bad teeth so can they. It does not take away, they think, from the charms of their best girl if she smiles at them with a gap in her teeth, or if in colour they shade into the darkest of greys. As for a man, he can always lie in ambush behind his moustache, or at worst he can draw down his upper lip and leave the unseen a mystery.

Still, there is hope for the future, and England shows signs of awakening! A truly progressive member of a certain board of guardians recently had the temerity to demand tooth-brushes for the pauper children. The worthy mayor who presided at the meeting was nearly paralysed at the audacity of the request. He not only sternly refused, but he denounced it as

pampered luxury and extravagance, and he was so roused by the outrageous proposal that he taunted his brother guardians, and said they themselves had probably not indulged in the sinful luxury of a tooth-brush for forty-five years. Possibly, but at any rate it proves that England is really awakening, and that even an infant pauper may some day look forward to the rapture of possessing a tooth-brush!

Yet even bad teeth sometimes find their Nemesis! A very important public position was recently vacant for which there were some two hundred applicants. These slowly resolved themselves down to two — one an able man, and the other an exceptionally able man. They had to have a deciding interview with the arbiter of their fate, so great a man that he is called a personage, and he gave the position to the able man rather than the exceptionally able man. His explanation for his curious choice was quite simple, "He really had such horrid teeth that I could not bear to have him always about."

Has any historian left his testimony as to the teeth of the ancient Romans, when

that great nation fell into decadence? Statues all testify that the deterioration did not affect their noses, but I feel sure that if their rigid marble lips could open we should find the first cause of their historic downfall.

As the extinction of a nation is foreordained in its very inception, so the fall of America is possibly already predestined. Well, it may be owing to trusts, but it will not be owing to teeth. All over the American land is heard the busy wheel of the dentist. Hundreds of thousands of dentists are forever filling and scraping and pulling American teeth, and the American people emerge from their dentist chairs and smile broadly, a source of joy to the beholder and not pain. They pay their dentists, if not with rapture, at least with resignation, because they know that their children will inherit good teeth, and it will be a pleasure to kiss them from their cradle on, at all stages. Nor when their young men go out to war will they be declared by the medical examiners unfit because of their bad teeth. Instead, they will clench their good teeth and fight right pluckily, as only those can

who attend strictly to business, undisturbed by pain.

One hears England called the freeest republic in the world, and that here, as nowhere else, every man has his chance. Well, England may be, to all intents and purposes, a republic, but to rise from the ranks is only for the man of commanding talent, and for him there is always room at the top — everywhere — all over the world. But for the ordinary man who has ordinary abilities, and yet is not without ambition, America is the land.

He may start as a day labourer and have luck and his son may one day be President of the United States; or he may grace any one of those innumerable offices which are in the gift of a grateful party! That keeps self-respect lively in a man, and is what makes him know not only his own trade, but just a little more. How one suffers because the British workman only does what he is obliged to — and not that. How often one rebels because the subordinate English official knows just what he is obliged to know, and not a hair's breadth more! That same man set down in America

will learn to the fullest extent of his intelligence.

Tooth-brushes make for health, health makes for intelligence, and it is the intelligent man the world wants and pays for; which proves the incalculable importance of tooth-brushes in the progress of the world. Possibly the atmosphere of a republic is more conducive to good teeth; but, really, England should make a supreme effort to save her waning power from falling into the grasp of the great republic, which it is inevitably bound to do if England does not go to the dentist.

In the political economy of nations the tooth-brush is of much more importance than the sword, and toothpowder is infinitely more important than gunpowder. As England never considers the millions she annually spends in gunpowder, why does she not pause in her martial career and spend a few thousand pounds in toothpowder?

The Pleasure of Patriotism

IN the way of rulers there is nothing quite so nice as a king. A king focuses one's patriotism, and being above everybody in his kingdom is probably the only person in it who arouses no envy. The fact is he inspires in us a sense of proud proprietorship. We rejoice that he has the loveliest of queens, and the lovelier she looks the more we are gratified, just as if she were one of the family. So when the king's diplomacy wins a bloodless victory we are as proud as if most of the credit belonged to us.

Indeed, one realises the intimate pleasures of patriotism most on coming from an impersonal republic to a kingdom where the royal family is a vital part of the national life. We republicans are nothing if not patriotic, but while we are loyal to the broader aspects of patriotism we miss perhaps its little intimate pleasures.

It is, for example, rather difficult to feel a deep sense of personal loyalty towards the

man whom the freak of fortune places for four years at the head of the nation, and of whom one knows very little. The personal interest one takes in him and his family is quite artificial. Opposed to him in politics, one doubts his fitness for his great position; and if one is of his party one favours him with that frank criticism which one naturally feels for the man who yesterday was no better than oneself, and who in four years will come down from his exalted height with the rapidity of a sky-rocket, only to join the army of the "forgotten" so delightfully characteristic of republics.

A republic is a worthy and useful institution, but there is a monotony in a country that consists entirely of kings and queens. It is very nice for all to be born free and equal, but it is not interesting, and there is some comfort in knowing it is not true, for Nature hurls us into the world a living contradiction to that rash statement of the Declaration of Independence.

It is only since I have lived in England that I have recognised the value of the lesser patriotism. Without being in any way disloyal to my own country, I must confess

that I am conscious of quite new emotions in this at least partial possession of a king. One feels a critical sense of ownership. The Houses of Parliament belong to me, and Westminster Abbey, and the Horse Guards. A whole troop of these clattered past me in Oxford Street to-day, and, though they didn't know it, I reviewed them from the top of a 'bus. I own the sentries before Buckingham Palace, and I take a personal interest in the new gilding of the great railings, for so much gilding must impress visiting royalities, and visiting royalities ought to be impressed!

Now our American Government not only declines to impress foreigners, but takes unnecessary pains to remind us that Benjamin Franklin appeared in homespun and wollen stockings at the Court of France. Times have changed since then, and though we have discarded wollen stockings in our intercourse with foreign Courts, our republic, in her consistent encouragement of an out-of-date Spartan simplicity, leaves her ambassadors to pay her legitimate little bills themselves, with the result that she limits her choice of representatives to men who

are not only distinguished, but also rich enough to pay the heavy and necessary expenses of their great position, which should by right be covered by an adequate salary.

It is not that our Government is impecunious; it is only pennywise. Now for the first time in our history America has an embassy in London worthy of her greatness, thanks not to our Government, but to the princely munificence of her new Ambassador. Perhaps he will never know the impetus he has given to the lesser patriotism, nor with what innocent pride we have contemplated his residence from every point of view, and with what patriotic rapture we watched the erection of that splendid marquee destined for the welcome of his fellow-countrymen.

For the first time I realised that this was *our* embassy and *our* marquee, and I was proud of my country. These were the outward and visible sign of our great prosperity. Perhaps our Ambassador thinks he is the temporary owner of this stately splendour. It is a pardonable mistake, but the fact is we are the owners, we Americans who have strayed into this crowded and lonely London

by way of Cook's tours, and floating palaces, and who are, many of us, homesick for the sight of something "real American."

Last Saturday we celebrated that famous Fourth of July which England is so courteous as to forgive. For the first time we penetrated into our embassy. We were aliens no more, we were, so to speak, on our native heath, we could not be crushed even by those magnificent footmen in powder and plush — our footmen — who, as beseems the footmen of a free and independent people, were quite affable.

How proudly we patriots filed up the marble stairs and stared at the pictures and at each other, and acknowledged with a genuine glow of pride how well we were all dressed. I guess!

"We are a prosperous nation," I exulted, as I had some republican refreshment in the marquee under a roof of green-and-white striped bunting. How good the lemonade tasted! A patriotic lady, with a huge bow of stars and stripes tied in her buttonhole, said enthusiastically, "There is nothing like American lemonade!"

For once one rose superior to the English.

One longed to recite to them the Declaration of Independence. I swelled with pride, it was all so well done, and it was my embassy, my marquee, my ices, and my Ambassador. For the first time one revelled in the joy of a worthy possession. For once the English accent was relegated where it belonged — to the background — and we Americans talked unreproved with all those delightful and familiar intonations which eighty millions of people have stamped as classic.

My only other experience of a Fourth of July reception, though there have been many distinguished and hospitable American Ministers since, was years ago. Two of us, urged on by patriotism, chartered a four-wheeler, and were deposited before a modest house, which was so dark inside, compared to the glare outside, that we stumbled up the dim stairs behind other ardent republicans, and groped for the hand of our hostess, who had apparently mislaid her smile early in the day. Then we blinked our way into a dark drawing-room, where a circle of patriots stared coldly at us.

In our search for our Minister we attached ourselves to a little procession that filed into

the next room, and we found him talking with delightful affability to an Englishman. To an Englishman, and on this day of all days! To an enemy of that great country which paid him his inadequate salary, while we, his own people, stood meekly about waiting until it should suit him to notice us, and bestow on us that handshake which is the inexpensive entertainment of all republican functions.

First we stood on one foot, and then we stood on the other, and then we coughed — a deprecating, appealing cough — and finally our Minister took a lingering, fond farewell of his Englishman, and then turned to us, with a frost-bitten expression of resignation which did not encourage us to linger. We shook his limp hand, and then we jostled each other into the dining-room.

We were filled with an acute resentment, but far from declining to break bread in his house we decided to take it out of him in refreshments; but the unobtrusive simplicity of the preparations foiled our unworthy designs.

Those were simpler days, and enthusiastic republicans arrived in every variety of

attire. Most popular of all was that linen "duster" with which in all its creases the travelling American loved to array himself. Sometimes he wore a coat under it and sometimes he didn't. Those were the days of paper collars and "made-up" ties, and on state occasions a cluster diamond "bosom pin." It was a stifling hot day, and we passed into the small dining-room, where a long table imprisoned three waiters. It was a question of each for himself, and I remember the father of a family clutching a plate of what we Americans call "crackers," and refusing the contents to all but his own offspring.

How we struggled for tea, and what a mercy it was that the waiters were protected from bodily assault by the table! One bestowed on me a tablespoonful of ice cream, densely flavoured with salt. For a moment I hated my country. Republican elbows poked me in every direction, and while I stood helpless in the crush I saw an elderly and stout compatriot pour the tea she had captured into the saucer, and with a placid composure proceed to drink it in that simple way.

"To think of it," a voice cried into my ear in pained and shocked surprise, "and she a relation of Longfellow's!"

Exhausted I found myself in the street in a chaos of frantic republicans, part of whom clamoured to get into the house, and part struggled to get out.

If our great Government would only realise that there is nothing so good for the soul as a thrill of patriotism! It is worth cultivating. We cannot all lay down our lives for our country, but there are lesser acts of loyalty which are of infinite value. It belongs to the lesser patriotism to show other folks that we are just as good as they are, if not a bit better. It is our patriotic duty to wear good clothes, to look prosperous, and to prove to foreigners that the star-spangled banner is quite at home even when floating over a palace. It is really worth while going down Park Lane just to say "Our Embassy!"

When I told the cabman to drive to the American Embassy, and for the first time in history he positively knew the way, I thrilled with patriotic pride. It marked an epoch.

Romance and Eyeglasses

IT is curious to observe that even the greatest realists do not venture to bestow eyeglasses on their heroines. It is rather odd too, seeing how many charming women do in real life wear them, nor are they debarred by them from the most dramatic careers and the most poignant emotions. But while the modern novelist has bestowed eyeglasses on everybody else he has not yet had the hardihood to put them on the nose of his heroine. Why?

It is a problem which again shows the unquestionably undeserved and superior position of man, for a novelist does not hesitate to put him behind any kind of glasses, and leave him just as fascinating and dangerous as he was before. Eyeglasses are so much the common lot of humanity these degenerate days that babies are nearly born with them, to judge at least from the tender age of the bespectacled infants one sees trundled past in their per-

ambulators. And there is no doubt that the time will come, if the strain on the hearing increases from the diabolic noises in the streets, that the next generation's hearing will be as much affected as our eyes are now. The result will be that all the world will be using ear-trumpets, and the novelist of the future, the accredited historian of manners, will be obliged, if he is at all accurate, to have his love-sick hero whisper his passion to the heroine through an ear-trumpet. However it is a comfort not to be obliged to solve the riddles of the future.

Still if it is inevitable that the future deaf hero will have to fall in love with a deaf heroine, why should not the present astigmatic hero in novels be permitted to fall in love with a beautiful creature in glasses? He certainly does it often enough in real life. Of course it would not do for a heroine to have a wooden leg, I grant, and yet I have met a hero with a wooden leg, and I am quite sure I know several who have lost an arm; why then should it be required of us poor women to be so perfect? If a man can wear spectacles without forfeiting his position as a hero of romance, I demand

the same right for a woman. Why, a man can even be bald and she will love him all the same! Now I ask would the hero love her under the same circumstances? There is no use arguing, for that very fact proves that there are laws for men and laws for women.

The truth is she will love him under every objectionable kind of circumstance, both in real life and in novels. Has not a thrilling romance of recent years produced a hero without legs, and made him all the more hideously captivating to the patron of the circulating library? Now what novel reader would, even under the auspices of so gifted a novelist, take any stock in a heroine similarly afflicted? Yes I fear, though it is neither here nor there, that men also have it their own way in literature.

To be sure there are instances of blind heroines inspiring a passion, and also, I believe, of lame heroines limping poetically through the pages of a novel, as well as burdened with other disabilities which apparently never take away from their charms; but I know of no heroine whom the novelist has endowed with a *pince-nez*.

Now why are glasses in literature so incompatible with romance in a woman while they never damage a man?

Why can a man look at the object of his passionate adoration through all the known varieties of glasses and yet not lose for an instant the breathless interest of the most gushing of novel readers? His eyeglasses may even grow dim with manly tears, and the lady readers' own eyes will be blurred with sympathetic moisture. But let the heroine weep behind her glasses and the most inveterate devourer of novels will close the book in revolt. It is no use to describe how the heroine's great brown eyes looked yearningly at the hero behind her glasses, nor how they swam in tears behind those same useful articles, the reader refuses to read, and even if the heroine is only nineteen and bewitchingly beautiful, she is at once divested of any romance.

What a mercy for the novelist in this age of perpetual repetition, of twice told tales, if he might give his heroine a new attribute! One feels sure that if eyeglasses and their variations were permitted they would produce quite a new kind of heroine, to the

immense advantage and relief of literature. Of course the novelist has to keep up with the times; it is as imperative for him as for the fashion-books, for it is from him alone that future generations will learn how we lived, dressed and looked, and what were our favourite sufferings. So the novelist cannot of course ignore what is so common as eyeglasses and he has in turn bestowed them on all his characters except his heroines. One can understand his hesitation when one tries oneself to put glasses on the noses of one's own literary pets, and then realises how they war with romance. Put a pair on the nose of the loveliest Rosalind who ever wandered through the enchanted forest of Arden, or let the most pathetic Ophelia look through them at Hamlet with grief-stricken eyes, and I am quite sure that even Shakespeare's poetry would not survive the shock.

But if eyeglasses are tabooed by novelists, what shall we say of spectacles? What gallery would accept a Juliet with spectacles? For a woman in literature to wear spectacles is to put her out of the pale of romance at once. Even in real life spec-

tacles are a problem, but to the heroine of a novel they are impossible. No novelist with any regard for his publisher or his sales would venture to give his heroine gold spectacles. The only ones I remember as the property of a heroine of fiction belonged to the heroine when she repented, and they more than anything else proved the sincerity of her remorse, and these were the famous blue spectacles in "East Lynne" that worked such an amazing transformation upon that erring and repentant lady.

Yes, a heroine can be repentant behind spectacles, but I defy her to be alluring. I was struck by their sobering effect on studying the head of the Venus de Medici decorated with a pair in the window of an inspired optician. They so changed her expression that she might have successfully applied for a position in a board-school.

It is possibly a digression, but I should like to know why opticians and corset-makers look upon the young Augustus and Clytie, who loved Apollo the sun-god, as especially created to exhibit their wares? It seems but a pitiful ending to the career of a Roman

Emperor to show the passing multitude how to wear spectacles, or to prove the superior excellence of a certain kind of green shade for weak eyes. And why should Clytie, with her face shyly downbent, as well it may be, be obliged to appear in the newest things in stays, in Great Portland Street? I wonder.

To return to glasses. Perhaps the only thing in glasses on which a rash novelist might venture is the monocle. I have not yet met a feminine monocle in fiction, but we all know its entrancing effect when worn by a man. We even realise its power in real life. It gives a man a kind of moral support and even changes his character. I have seen meek and rather ordinary men stick in a monocle, and it at once gave them that fictitious fascination, that, so to speak, go-to-the-devil impudence which is so irresistible. It is the aid to sight essentially of the upper classes, or of the best imitation, and as such it naturally inspires the confidence of society.

Of course the feminine monocle is not adapted to all costumes, but there is about it a rakishness, a coquetry particularly suited

to a riding-habit. The suggestion is quite at the service of any harassed novelist. It may be quite as much a help to sight as spectacles, but, O, the difference! A woman buries her youth behind spectacles, but she can coquet to the very end behind a monocle.

A charming creature used to pass my window every day on horseback. I had a distant vision of a rounded figure in the perfection of a habit, a silk hat at just the right angle and a monocle. I wove romances about her; she was Lady Guy Spanker and all the rest of those mannish and dangerous coquettes of whom I had read. Yesterday we met at a mutual greengrocer's. She was elderly, and she had discarded the monocle for a pair of working eyeglasses with black rims, through which she studied the vegetables with the eye of experience. She also wore a wig, a black wig. I was so aghast that I stared speechlessly at the greengrocer who patiently offered me cabbages at "tuppence" a piece. "It can't be," I said, still staring. "I beg your pardon, Madam," he said, quite offended, "it's the usual price." "It must be the monocle,"

and I pursued my train of thought aloud. "No," the greengrocer retorted with some impatience, "it's a Savoy."

But it is only the monocle which has that rejuvinating effect. The other day I called on the loveliest woman I know, and who has always seemed to me the picture of exquisite and immortal youth. She looked up from the corner of a couch sumptuous with brilliant cushions. She had been reading, and she laid aside her book and something else. I followed her hand and felt as guilty as if I had been caught eavesdropping. There lay a pair of gold spectacles and I saw a red line across the bridge of her lovely nose. Those wicked spectacles! How they took away the bloom of her youth. To me she will never seem young again, only well-preserved, alas! How tragic to think that even beauty comes to spectacles at last! Now how different it is with men. If they do have to wear spectacles they do it boldly, and not on the sly, and yet they always find some one to love them, so the novelists prove, and they ought to know.

But a heroine with spectacles, that is a

different thing. What novelist has the courage for such an innovation? Even realism, which we know usually stops at nothing, does draw the line there.

Now I do ask in all seriousness, are eyeglasses in fiction really so incompatible with romance?

The Plague of Music

YESTERDAY as I strolled through this little Hampshire village, I passed a woman with a baby in her arms, followed by a chubby boy of about three, whose little trousers had only just emerged from the petticoat stage. He lingered behind his mother, and drew across his pursed-up lips and his puffed-out red cheeks the instrument called a mouth harmonica, and drank in rapturously his own celestial harmonies.

"Come 'long with your mewsic," his mother remarked briefly over her shoulder. And he came.

I looked smilingly after that young disciple of what may be truly described as the most offensive of the fine arts, and meditated on the poverty of language which describes by the same word the art of Beethoven and the tooting of a penny whistle — at least in the vernacular of the people.

There is, perhaps, no common char-

acteristic more unfortunate than the sheep-like habit human beings have of imitating each other. As infants, the howling of one baby certainly encourages any evilly disposed infant in the neighbourhood to imitation, and a group of roaring youngsters rejoice in their rivalling shrieks.

As we grow older this artless love of noise is of necessity controlled, but human nature must have vent, so by a kind of common consent we give way to our natural exuberance in what, for lack of other description, we are pleased to call "music." Music is the only divine art we are promised in Heaven, and it is certainly the only divine art with which we are tortured on earth.

The nerves of the ear must be the most sensitive of the whole nervous system, for they have it in their power to inflict the most exquisite torture. The silent arts, no matter how outrageously presented, cannot possibly make one quiver in agony, nor set one's teeth on edge with the sharp lash of a discord. Eyes are long-suffering, and they look at what is discordant with indifference, possibly with resignation, and at most with impatience; nor have these silent discords

the power to leave the human being distinctly the worse for his experience.

No other art is able to inflict such merciless suffering! Under the name of music we are afflicted with every variety of noise, including the hand organ, the bagpipes, the German band, the man who toots the cornet in the street, the harp man, the lady who has seen better days and who sings before our house in the evening, the active piano-organ invented by a heartless genius, the musical box and all its amazing progenies, the gramophone and the pianola. Not to mention the millions of pianos and the millions of fiddles that never cease being thumped and scratched all the world over night and day. The contemplation of such collective discord is truly appalling.

Unfortunately for us we live in an inventive and imitative age, and one is inclined to think that the devil is the patron saint of inventors, or why has the blameless spinet waxed great and blossomed into a piano? Why should the resources of a modern orchestra be at the disposal of every infant whose mistaken mother plumps it down on the piano-stool and lets it thump the keys

to keep it quiet! One would so much rather hear its natural shrieks than that other noise which is supposed to be a harmless substitute! Why music, of all the fine arts, with its power for inflicting untold anguish, should be the most common, passes my understanding.

The printed page is undoubtedly long-suffering, but it is silent. It is of course true that to be an author, nothing is necessary but a sheet of paper and a pencil, but I defy the most energetic author to read his work to ears that refuse to hear. Now with music it is different, one simply *can't* get away from it, because cruel inventions — I do not think I am exaggerating? — have brought its exercise within reach, I will not say of the poor only, for the thumping of the rich and great is equally horrid, but of the mistaken poor.

I do not urge that the infant mind, in the process of being cultivated, should be turned to literature, for it is bad enough already owing to benevolent publishers who, in the praiseworthy desire not to allow any light to be hidden under a bushel, emulate each other in trying to illuminate the world with

farthing tallow-dips! It would, indeed, be ghastly to listen to the literary outpourings of every infant one met, and equally ghastly never to be able to flee from the rendering of masters of literature as interpreted by the intellect of three years up. Thank heaven, we are spared this in literature if not in music, but, I ask, if we must have a fine art to trifle with, why not take to painting? Painting is *so* inoffensive.

It was the English who, before they became so musical, dallied for a while with painting. There was a time, if we may believe those biographers of manners, the novelists, when all England sketched, and so gave vent to all its superabundant emotion in paint. There was no landscape safe from the emotional Englishwoman. Instead of strumming false notes on the hotel piano she went out with a paint-box and sketched the uncomplaining landscape. At any rate the long-suffering landscape made no sound.

It cannot be denied that one suffers less from a bad picture than from a bad anything else, the agony also is short, nor is it necessary in the process of painting to

inflict pain. Painting is an exceedingly silent art, and its results are easily disposed of as wedding presents, because the recipient cannot possibly rebel.

There is, also, that delightful alternative of decorating one's house with one's own immortal works. I was recently shown a lovely picture gallery entirely hung with the work of its owner. I emerged from the experience smiling and quite calm. Now what would have been my condition had the good lady insisted on reciting to me eighty of her poems (there were eighty pictures), or, more harrowing still, had she insisted on playing to me eighty compositions of her own, or even eighty compositions of others, with stiff and reluctant hands? For which reason I maintain that painting is the most inoffensive of the arts and deserves to be encouraged.

But seriously, why should every child be taught to play the instrument quite irrespective of its having any talent or taste for music? Why in the world, where martyrdom is usually the price of living, should a select little army of martyrs suffer a double martyrdom? Why draw them by the hairs

of their inoffensive heads to the piano-stool and make, as it were, at one fell swoop, two martyrs, the one at the piano and the wretch who, on the other side of the wall, gives the lie to Congreve, who mistakenly declared that "Music has charms to soothe a savage breast"? Had Congreve lived now he would have hesitated to make so rash a statement.

In Congreve's day the piano, the greatest instrument of torture of modern times, had not been evolved. Its ancestor, the spinet, tinkled plaintively away under its breath like a musical mosquito with a cold on its chest, and was — alas, how happily! — within reach of only the few. In those days, when its feeble tinkle was a mere whisper, house-walls were made of such stupendous thickness that not even the turmoil of a modern orchestra in the next room could have penetrated.

But now, in these unhappy days, when every family is obliged to have a piano or be despised, and when in apartment-houses each floor quivers to a piano of its own, the architect and contractor — a terrible combination for evil! — have conspired together

to erect walls like tissue paper, behind which the harassed householder cowers, mercilessly exposed to musical scales as practised on an instrument powerful enough to have cast down the walls of Jericho. And here he vainly seeks for a peaceful retreat from the noise of cabs, 'buses, motors, traction-engines, electric trams, and all the other ear-splitting sounds which, apparently, follow in the relentless march of progress.

It is very appalling to consider that at this very moment the children of the entire civilised world are, with few exceptions, engaged in playing false notes on a variety of musical instruments. It is not too much to say that in this respect the uncivilised have a colossal advantage over the civilised.

In a certain familiar oratorio innumerable pages and much time are taken up in an endless reiteration of the words, "All we like sheep." I beg to ask if the worthy sopranos, altos, tenors and the rest, ever did realise the profound truth of that over-repeated and rather monotonous statement? We *are* all like sheep! We do what our neighbours do; we think what they think and we wear what they wear. In fact, we

are tailor-made inside and out; no, we are worse than tailor-made, we are ready-tailor-made, for we are made by the gross.

If there is a thing the world shudders at and resents it is originality. If a human being cannot be classified as belonging to a certain cut of trousers, coat or waistcoats, let him beware, for he is a misfit human being, and we all know the cheap end of all misfits! It is as embarrassing to have anything obtrusive in one's mental make-up as in one's physical. Happy is he who is on a dead level!

One would like to offer up a meek plea for originality were one not aware how unpopular it would be. To be original is only next worse thing to being a genius. We do resign ourselves to sporadic cases of genius, but a world peopled by genius (for we all know what that is akin to) is more than we could stand. It is about the same with originality. So the next time we sing "All we like sheep," let us consider well the meaning of these inspiring but misunderstood words, and greatly rejoice.

This train of thought is the result of my landlady's little boy, separated from me

only by a thin lath partition of a wall, playing five-finger exercises in halting rhythm and with innumerable false notes. The instrument is one in which the flight of years has left a tone like a discontented nutmeg-grater. If the little boy had the legs of a centipede and played his chosen instrument with these instead of two dingy little hands, he could not perpetrate more false notes.

The number of false notes that can be evolved through the medium of eight fingers and two thumbs is simply appalling! The little boy, a pale child in a long pinafore and big white ears, hates his chosen instrument as much as I do, and so we meet on a level of mutual affliction. I loathe hearing him, and he hates his instrument; now, in the name of good common sense, why must he be offered up as a sacrifice?

His mother is a poor woman, and the tinkling cottage piano with the plaited faded-green front represents the chops and many other wholesome things she has not eaten, and what she allows the young lady in third-floor back, who takes her board out in piano lessons, is a serious sacrifice. Now, I ask, what for?

Why is all the world playing an unnecessary piano?

Marriage has a fatal effect on music. For some occult reason as soon as a girl is married, the piano — the grave of so much money and time — retires out of active life, and swathed in "art draperies," burdened by vases, cabinet photographs and imitation "curios," serves less as a musical instrument than a warning. But like all warnings it passes unheeded, for no sooner are the next generation's legs long enough to dangle between the key-board and the pedals, than the echoes awaken to the same old false notes that serve no purpose unless an hour of daily martyrdom over a tear-splashed key-board is an excellent preparation for the trials of life.

Music, as it is taught, is not so much a fine art as a bad habit. Alas, we have got into the habit of learning to play the piano, and the bad habit of playing on the violin is fatally on the increase. Seriously now: why? Because it is considered both uncultivated and quite unfashionable not to be fond of music or to pretend to be. Why? The answer, "All we like sheep."

I know of only one man who has the courage to say that he hates music. It is his misfortune, not his fault, and without doubt there is something wrong about his inner ear. Still, I always wonder why his frank and honest confession is received with a kind of pitying contempt, as if he had writ himself down to be both a brute-beast and a heathen.

Love music, and for some unexplained reason you at once have a profound scorn for all such as do not. My friend who hates music understands and loves both pictures and poetry, and, goodness knows, there are plenty who do not! And yet I have never heard him inveigh against those who love neither. Yes, music may be a divine art, but it is certainly not a charitable art.

Even as long as one can remember, the study of music and the making of musical instruments have been terribly on the increase. Mediocrity, that might do excellent work in other fields, strums away at the piano or scratches away at the violin, or with quavering voice sings those songs which have inspired the poet to write:

I am saddest when I sing,
And so are those who hear me!

The world is full of music schools, that turn out thousands of young musicians every year, who take to music instead of dressmaking or plumbing or any other useful employment, and these are let loose on a foolish world and proceed in turn to make martyrs of the defenceless infants of our land. And it is curious, too, and instructive to observe, considering the vast sums of money and the amount of time spent in the pursuit of music, how rarely one can find any one who plays or sings well enough to give even a little pleasure.

The possible reason may be that the standard of mediocrity has become so terribly high! For the halting amateur of to-day might have served as a Paderewski of the past. Our ears have grown hopelessly fastidious.

No more is the afternoon caller regaled with *The Happy Farmer*, as performed by the talented child of the house, and listened to with real pleasure by unsophisticated grandparents. We know too much to listen to the talented child, and as for the talented

child it generally developes into a young person who has nervous prostration at the mere idea of playing before anyone. For what purpose, then, these hours of five-finger agony and those enormous bills which might have been paid for so much better results?

Then, too, consider the awful competition to which the present votary of music is subjected — pitted, as it were, against the pianola, the Æolian, the gramophone, and the other countless mechanical devices, which so successfully prove that human ingenuity can create everything but a soul. Wet blankets they are to all musical aspiration, for what musical aspiration can successfully compete against steel fingers without nerves?

I do not think one would feel so acutely about the matter if music were a silent art, and if it did not represent such a waste of money and energy which, turned to other uses, might have been of such value.

Let us have the courage to say, when it is the truth, that we dislike music. It is nothing to boast of, but neither is it a crime nor a disgrace. If your blessed Sammy

bedews the piano keys with tears of anguish, and if, after a time, you discover that his soul is not amenable to the poetry of sound, then earn the fervid gratitude of your neighbour on the other side of that jerry-built wall, and release the young sufferer.

Be merciful!

A Domestic Danger

THERE are certain times of the year when the shops, the acute arbiters of fashion, send broadcast those entrancing picture-books which advise the wavering woman what to buy, what to wear, and how to wear it; and every year the lovely creatures portrayed grow more lovely. Once my dream was to be a queen in a black velvet garment, that hid my pinafore, and a spiky crown—the kind as old as fairy stories. While waiting for the real article I practised with a bed sheet and crowned myself with a brass jardiniere that leaked, but was very imposing, though upside down. I have had other aspirations since, and my very last has just come by a discontented postman because it would not go into the letter-box.

One goes through all stages of dreams until one comes to the conclusion, but that is always very late in life, that one must resign oneself to the inevitable; even science cannot turn one's nose down, when nature

has turned it up, and no longing for five feet ten will help one whom nature has finished off at five feet two, though shops have been known to succeed where nature and science have failed, and it is owing mainly to them that this is the age of tall women. Why the men do not keep pace is partly a physiological riddle and partly because the shops are not interested in mere men. But it is a common sight these days to see a great blonde goddess with gigantic feet and hands, which she takes no trouble to conceal, having in tow a little man just tall enough to tickle her shoulder with his moustache. It is perhaps a merciful dispensation of Divine Providence that extremes not only meet, but evidently like to meet.

Yes, one's ideals in the process of living change. However, one feels convinced that the feminine ideal is always connected with clothes, and whatever the Venus of Milo may be to men I am quite sure that with her generous waist and rudimentary costume she has never been the ideal of a feminine dreamer. It is not so much the impropriety of having on few clothes that disturbs the

female mind as it is the having on no real nice clothes. The old ideals are getting so dreadfully old-fashioned! A Greek goddess at an afternoon tea would have nothing in common with the new ideal but her height; her ample waist and her heroic simplicity would be out of it in an age which is trying to live up to the new standard of beauty as set by those infallible connoisseurs—the dry-goods stores. The enchanting books which these send out at the beginning of each season represent as nothing else the world's ideal of perfect feminine beauty. I will not discuss men's beauty, because a more gifted pen than mine has been at quite unnecessary pains to increase their already alarming vanity. But I must confess that now my own standard of womanly loveliness veers like a weather-cock to the wind, as I study the pictorial production commercial generosity stuffs into my letter-box. Once I wanted to be a queen with a real crown, now I want to be just like the beauteous creature on that paper cover.

Once I thought to be perfectly beautiful was to be broad at the shoulders and pinched at the knees; then it was the other

way about. Finally I was educated — literature helped the delusion — to think that to be acceptable one had to be a tiny thing stopping just where "his" manly heart throbbed. I have seen shopworn feminine articles left over from that bygone season, and how ridiculous they do look!

I am sorry these days for a short girl, for the man with the throbbing heart is always on the look-out for a young giantess, into whose lovely eyes he can only gaze by standing on a step-ladder.

Yes, I really want to look just like that enchanting creature who gazes at me from the book Mr. Whiteley, in his subtle study of my weak mind, sent me yesterday. Who is the divine original? Apart from wearing such beautiful clothes, what has she done to be so perfectly lovely? She cannot be less than seven feet tall, and crowned by a dream of a hat. Her eyes are so big and brown and trustful, and her mouth is the traditional rosebud, while her nose — a feature to which in real life nature is usually most unkind — is so small that fashions for pocket-handkerchiefs must soon go out. Her shoulders are so broad, and yet her

waist is so attenuated, that I wonder if — well — if she has any organs, or does she rise superior to organs? I ask in the spirit of serious inquiry, for I should not like to be misunderstood. And then when it comes to that which society, in its exquisite propriety, blushes to mention, I do believe that under those frilly petticoats, Nature, ever considerate and bountiful to her, has provided her with telescopic stilts, and not the other thing. At least that is the only explanation I have ever found for her divine length! So what wonder if one sits at one's dressmaker's day in and day out, while that patient woman produces volume after volume representing perfect beauty combined with perfect taste, that the average woman is crushed at the impossibility of reaching such a standard of perfection?

If I were a man, my only aim in life would be to find the original of that superb creature, and lay at her feet my heart, my life and my purse. The last is very necessary, for she needs all those innumerable and fascinating things with which Mr. Whiteley, Mr. Harrod, Mr. Barker, and all the rest of

those well-meaning but cruel tempters fill up the pages of their catalogues. These catalogues are really a biography in pictures, in which the beautiful She is shown to the world from the most intimate undress up, and in every phase she is lovely and dignified. Her perfect propriety in "combinations" — for which occasion she evidently discards stilts! — her *svelte* and sinuous grace in corsets, while in petticoats one hardly knows which to admire most, her frills or her bland unconsciousness, and as for her dresses, from the one in which she is thrillingly pictured as pouring out a slow cup of coffee, she cannot fail to arouse in each the jealousy of the most generous of her sex.

Her characteristics are always dignity, vacancy, and a smile not always appropriate to the occasion, I am free to confess, for I have seen her smile, by mistake of course, in the heaviest of widow's weeds. But perhaps that was because her head is always supremely unconscious of what the rest of her is doing. It is the unconsciousness of a great artist who is attending strictly to business; for she has not even a touch of vulgar feminine coquetry.

If she fascinates the weak-minded man who idly turns the leaves of the fashion-book, it is in spite of herself. When she stands confessed in, say, corsets — an attitude which must be trying in the cold eye of the public — she does not look embarrassed, she only looks dignified. She is, in fact, the direct modern descendant of the Vestal Virgins who sacrificed their beauty to religion, only she sacrifices her beauty to business. The comfort for a tired man to come home to her placid, well-dressed society! That she never loses her temper her exquisitely dressed head amply proves, for you can't lose your temper and preserve the serenity of your back hair! The rapture of a man and a father to come home to his perfectly dressed, silent infant which smiles sweetly from the latest thing in lace cribs, while She bends over him in a toilette which expresses as nothing else can maternal solicitude combined with perfect taste.

Then to see her play tennis, unflushed, unruffled, with her adorable hair still intact; skipping with such ladylike activity, and always smiling. What rapture for a loving man! The delight of golfing with her and

her numerous sisters — such a family resemblance! — unexcited, ladylike, the linen collar about her swan like throat never wilted, but a monument to some celestial laundress, and delivering her strokes into the landscape with that inconsequential feebleness which men love, say what they will.

Then, too, to see her listening, in full dress, to the touching strains of the pianola, as performed by a soul-inspired being in the last thing in party frocks and a flower-crowned *coiffure*, is a study of controlled emotion. She *is* moved, but too much emotion might ruffle what the poetry of commerce has so sweetly named her "transformation." So she controls her feelings, and looks with calm and thoughtful eyes at the back of the "artiste's" marvellous toilette, and possibly wonders, to the strains of the "Largo" of Händel, how she got into her "creation." But that is a dead and awful secret only known to Mr. Harrod or possibly to Messrs. Derry and Toms.

How many a time have I watched her in a paper-garden-party mingling with other lovely beings of her own sex, for her sense

of propriety never allows her to mingle with those gallant gentlemen in frock-coats and evening dress we admire in the tailors' windows. The landscape is—if I may say so—of a most ladylike nature. Mud is absent, for the fair beings meander about in a landscape which nature has apparently cleaned with a tooth-brush. I suppose their need for amusement is amply satisfied with staring at their lovely sisters or offering them fans or bouquets—for I have rarely seen them do anything else, though once the artist who portrayed them became dramatic, and introduced two young things of their kind playing at battledore and shuttlecock in the background.

The greatest innovation was when She was pictured as pouring tea in a baronial hall. The exquisite grace with which she "poured" was a lesson, though I had a terrible doubt as to whether there was anything in that perfect teapot. She wore a tea-gown which was the last "cry" in fluffiness, and the friends about her were gorgeous, in attitudes which did more justice to their toilettes than their manners, for the way they turned their flat backs on each

other might, in other society, have given offence. Another innovation in the picture was a perfect footman, a perfect page-boy, and a perfect butler, a noble being like an Archbishop, but much more serious. It was well that no other mere man was present even on paper, for the combination of loveliness was overpowering.

Ah, yes, indeed, if the usual run of mothers and wives were like these, then would there need to be no outcry against the selfish bachelor who refuses to marry. Instead, the bachelor in his five hundred horse-power motor, defying speed limit, palpitating with eagerness, would fly to lay himself at her exquisitely shod feet. For what does man care for beauty unadorned! As for intellect, well, intellect has never been in it!

I am quite sure that neither Mr. Whiteley, nor Mr. Harrod, nor the rest of the public-spirited gentlemen, whose only object in life is to make us beautiful, know what harm they are doing; or why do they portray a race of women to whose perfections mortal women must ever vainly aspire.

Your lovely syrens with their divine legs — there, the awful word is out! — never

go shopping through the mud in the early morning! When they wear a dress it is called a "creation," and it is certainly not the year before last's best in reduced circumstances. When they lift their elegant robes, and show their sumptuous frills, it proves that they know nothing of the depravity of "model" laundries. Nor do I for a moment believe that their smiling babies — the smile inherited from their mother, sweet, but slightly vacant—know the agonies of teeth, nettle-rash or colic.

In fact, I refuse to believe that such perfect loveliness can exist. It is a poet's dream, evolved by those worthy gentlemen who only make life a greater trial for us by sending us quarterly reminders of what we ought to be, but what most of us are not. It is a crime to introduce into the bosom of contented families such presentments of too lovely women. Man *is* weak, and when the wife of his heart comes home from shopping with her hat on one side, by accident, not coquetry, her ostrich plume limp and lank from a battle with the rain, a rent for the convenience of her nose, her *chaussures* caked with mud to match her petticoats,

and on her face an expression which is not bland as she hears shrieks proclaiming colic, how can he help but make sorrowful comparisons with a vision in his mind of a silent infant in a lace-smothered crib that smiles at him from Messrs. Dickins and Jones's alluring book?

Then is the harm done; the weak father falls a victim to his ideal, and his heart turns from his distracted, bedraggled wife to that lovely vision who entered a happy home through the innocent letter-box to the eternal destruction of its domestic peace. Thus "home," once the bulwark of the British nation, is rapidly becoming a mere mockery.

I ask, in the interest of society, why cannot the lovely beings in the fashion-papers and fashion-books be made less lovely? Whatever you are, and I commend this sentiment to all, as well as to distinguished haberdashers, be truthful. Be truthful! Chop off at least one foot and eight inches from those lovely ones who imperil our peace. Be realists at least occasionally; portray them with a rip, or a skirt which is short where it should be long; let their hair

be out of curl, and buttons off their boots — anything, only to prove that they also are human.

The postman has just brought another big, square, flat familiar parcel. I shall destroy it; it is too entrancing. It portrays Her in a golden *coiffure* crowned by a hat that breathes of spring. Clad in a perfect and appropriate "creation" she has climbed into an apple-tree, to which she clings with white gloved hands. Playfully and yet with perfect propriety she peeps through the clustering pink blossoms. It is the same smile, the same irreproachable nose, the same wave to her golden hair, the same great eyes. Now to put this vision of beauty and grace high up in a tree unflushed, unscratched, unruffled, untorn, is really too much to bear — besides, it is false to nature! The head of the house shall not look at her and make cruel comparisons, and decide in his ignorant masculine mind that all women can look so after they have climbed a tree. Then grow discontented when one tries to explain to him that they cannot. So then, before it is too late, here goes — into the fire! One domestic peace at least is saved.

Now I ask Mr. Whiteley, Mr. Harrod, Mr. Robinson, and all the rest of the gentlemen who stand for all that is best in the way of hats and clothes and things, and to whose benevolent guidance we women trust ourselves, be merciful as well as truthful, we beg, and do not make those beautiful creatures quite so beautiful!

It is the new invasion, compared to which the possible arrival of hordes of worthy yellow men is as nothing. The invasion, think, of too beautiful ideals into hitherto contented homes! Mr. Whiteley, you who have always provided everything, start a new branch, — give us peace! Head a great movement which shall have as object to portray the fashions by less bewildering beauty. Earn what has probably no commercial value, and that is our gratitude! Remember that we are not only women but customers.

Now supposing all your customers should revolt? What then?

A Study of Frivolity

AFTER studying the veracious and thrilling works of our modern dramatists, one comes to the conclusion that the lady with a past, though she may suffer from nothing else, does suffer tortures from tight boots. Whatever situation they put her in, however harrowing, pathetic or revolting, when boots would seem to be the last consideration of a tortured conscience, yet hers have that exquisite, brand-new perfection which proves that, when she is not planning wickedness nor torn by remorse, she spends the rest of her time buying boots, and we all know that new boots hurt rather more than a bad conscience.

It is also the happy destiny of this lady to wear the most superlatively beautiful clothes, and when, in moments of guilty emotion, she swishes her train about, we have a vision of petticoats which only she, indifferent to the voice of conscience and laundry charges, dares to wear; and still

more damning witness than her petticoats to her evil conscience is the elegance of her feet. Your real hardened adventuress on the stage always wears the most delicious slippers, no matter how inappropriate to the occasion, but she wears them prophetically as it were, for she alone knows that she is destined to die in the fifth act, with her feet to the footlights.

To the social philosopher there is no more interesting sight than the window of a fashionable shoemaker's, there to make mental notes of the destiny of all those charming little shoes and slippers that confront one in all the coquetry of commerce. The only thing needed is a band to make them frisk about in all their gold, white, scarlet and bronze frivolity. The sophisticated curve of the satin heel and the tiny pointed satin toe are still innocent of worldly knowledge. Care, even in the shape of the daintiest foot, has not touched them yet, they have not been danced in, nor kicked off, nor made love to; in fact, they have not been born.

There is, however, a destiny for slippers as well as other things, and there is a certain

slipper, long and slender, with arched instep and Louis XV heel which, so instinct tells us, is inevitably destined to belong to a lady with a past. Virtue never wears anything so subtle nor so pretty, for, indeed, it is only conscious rectitude that dares to dispense with coquetry, and wears her boots boldly down at the heel.

Given a woman's shoe, and one can easily evolve out of it her entire emotional history, just as a naturalist reconstructs from a bone the entire animal to which it once belonged. Not long ago I saw a famous German actress as Beata in Sudermann's play "The Joy of Living." It is a fine melodramatic part. She has a lover and a husband — familiar combination — but the sin is in the past, and they have all three reached that comfortable middle age when people are supposed to know better.

Unfortunately at the eleventh hour the husband discovers the secret of his wife's old faithlessness and his best friend's treachery. At a dinner in the last act Beata drinks a toast to "The Joy of Living," and promptly solves the riddle of existence by staggering into the next room and poisoning herself.

It was as she staggered away that the German actress deprived me of all my illusions for, as she lifted her dress rather high in her anguish, she exhibited a pair of broad, flat boots, with patent leather tips, and the kind of heels only virtue wears, broad and flat and low. I thought I saw side elastics, but that may have been the effect of a perturbed vision.

However, from that moment I lost all belief in Beata's trials. A woman with such boots never takes her own life, never has a lover, never has a past, but she has a good sensible husband who falls asleep after dinner, and while he snores she knits him golf stockings. The audience was under the impression that Beata had killed herself in the next room, but I knew better. No, those feet were not made for tragedy, even Sudermann's art could not convince me, and so a pair of German boots spoiled my illusions.

It is not often that we poor philistines have the privilege of studying at close range the lady who may be truly described as the pet of the stage, and when we do so we owe it entirely to our kind dramatists;

and find however much she and her sisters may differ in the details of their interesting careers, they have in common the transcendent charms of their toilettes and the fascination of their slippers.

When one sees how uninteresting the play would be without her, how often virtue is rather fatiguing and not nearly so well dressed, and how the dramatist gives his favourite the most interesting talk and the most dramatic situations, one realises her importance, and that she is quite indispensable to the stage, whatever she is in real life. One only regrets, when society is a little fatiguing, that she is not occasionally permitted to pass through in her gorgeous toilette and her immoral slippers, and that bewitching side glance which one only sees on the stage, just to make society, like the stage, a little more thrilling.

Now in the days of the older dramatists when much was left to what in this material age is fast dying out, that is the imagination, if the dungeon of Lord de Smyth was wanted, the scene-painter nailed up a sign-post with the simple notice, "This is the Dungeon of Lord de Smyth," and the

audience were as much thrilled as if they could hear the clanking of the fetters.

In these days we refuse to take our dungeons so absolutely on faith, and, still, if we see a too beautiful creature in red hair (fascinating crime always has red hair), gorgeous clothes, and slippers with Louis XV heels—that estimable monarch was responsible for so much sinfulness combined with singular good taste — and an opera cloak all lace and allurement, the kind for which virtue has neither the money nor the taste, then we can settle down to a good three hours' thrill, for those perfect garments are as much an indication of the dramatist's intentions as in less sophisticated days the sign-post which announced the dungeon of the de Smyths.

We have learnt by experience that certain kinds of clothes always come to a bad end, though never until the fifth act; while virtue, without any nice clothes to comfort her, has a very bad time for at least four acts and a half. One could wish the dramatists would give virtue a better chance!

A very charming woman regretfully confessed to me that the old proverb, that

virtue is its own reward, is distinctly discouraging. She felt, with a perfectly blameless existence behind her, that she had a right to demand of fate jewels more precious than imitation pearls, and a mode of transit more patrician than a 'bus or the "tube," or a four-wheeler on state occasions. Her bitterness was enhanced by a picture in the "tube-lift" of a lovely creature ablaze with diamonds, who advertises a firm of philanthropists from whom one can get one's Koh-i-noors on the instalment plan.

If ever a young person looks as if she had had a chequered past, it is this young person, so radiant, so self-satisfied, and so prosperous. She is a painful satire on virtue in a mackintosh with a dripping umbrella, who has no earthly hope of diamonds, no matter how she may long for them, and who stares drearily at the lovely being until she is bounced out upon terra firma, and then pushed into the rain by other virtues with umbrellas and very sharp elbows. The charming woman further declared that virtue should be offered a more substantial reward than imitation pearls these days when

the shoemakers, dressmakers and dramatists form a "combine" for the exclusive glorification of the lady in question.

But it is not only the eloquence of slippers, but the eloquence of petticoats! Are not our shop windows the Frenchiest of French novels, divided not into chapters, but into petticoats? Do they not form flamboyant rainbows behind those glittering plate-glass fronts? That there is no one inside of them takes nothing away from their charm. To see them outspread against a window — a bewildering chaos of colours, frilly, fluffy and fantastic, is the outward and visible sign of an inarticulate poet who lives sonnets in silk without putting them on paper. How much more satisfactory to live poems than merely to write them!

So every shop window proclaims that this is the age of petticoats. Who buys them, who wears them? Why are they never seen again? Yet well may we ask what sylph can worthily wear those coquettish fantasies? It must be conceded, though it will hurt out national pride, that only the women of one nation have that sovereign right.

It is the Frenchwoman alone who can lift her skirts with that supreme elegance which turns even the worst mud puddle into an instrument for the display of her exquisite grace. She is the artist of the petticoat — and if she lifts her skirts rather high, it is because she does not feel it her duty to help the County Council to sweep the streets with the tail of a draggled gown.

Now when an English woman lifts her skirt, she does it as one on business bent; coquetry is not in it. She makes a frantic clutch at the back of her skirt, grabs a solid handful, and drags it uncompromisingly forward until she outlines herself with simple, cruel distinctness. Her silhouette is a curious study in angles.

Though she has no coquetry about her feet or her petticoats, the fatality of fate ordains that she should always wear high-heeled slippers and cobweb stockings in that downpour which Divine Providence reserves exclusively for the English nation. This opportunity she also takes to wear those lace petticoats which, having survived the terrors of the British laundry, succumb to British mud. Heaven, in its inscrutable

wisdom, has denied to the Anglo-Saxons and Teutons that subtle turn of the wrist which makes the lifting of a skirt a fine art. Even the American woman, conqueror though she be of dukes and lesser things, has never yet conquered that Latin grace.

Now who buys those silken rainbows in the shops? Get the sphinx to answer that riddle if you can. Do they vanish into space, or are they bought by those radiant beings who flit about in electric landaulettes, and whom we never meet, because we flit about in 'buses?

If the rainbow ever touches earth it is on exceptional occasions which only prove the rule. And it is always when virtue, always elderly and stout, with big, flat feet in cloth boots, lifts her skirt and exhibits to the eye of the public a yellow or scarlet silk confection which hangs limp and dejected. Its melancholy flop and want of rustle plainly show its consciousness of being misunderstood and in a false position. The irreproachable petticoat, sacred to the eminently respectable, is usually black and of a material of the nature of horsehair. No shop boasts of it, and it is always pulled out

of an ignoble pile when required, and is quite Spartan in its unadorned simplicity.

That virtue is best adorned by itself we concede; still virtue is a little handicapped. I put it to the dramatists: Why not give her better clothes and let her for once triumph in the second act? The dramatists, inspired photographers of manners though they are, have a great deal to answer for! At best they give her a white dress, a blue sash, ankle-ties and no conversation. One asks how is she to compete with a stately creature with dramatic red hair and that sinuous and glittering costume fraught with tragic situations? What a fatal contrast when studied by the youth of our land who have been taught to regard the stage as an educator!

The stage is conceded to be a great educational and moral force, and yet I beg of those excellent gentlemen who provide the lessons that the stage so eloquently recites not to lavish on the lady in question that bewildering wardrobe which must give her a sense of peace and calm security that even a good conscience cannot bestow. For once put her into a bargain coat and skirt

left over from a sale at Tooting, adorn her with a tam o'shanter, the kind with a quill that sticks out in front, and put on her feet the boots of a perfect propriety, always short and broad, then see if the pit will adore her!

No, the pit will not adore her at all, for say what you will, it is the clothes that sway the earnest and indiscriminating lover of the drama. For once put virtue in a gossamer *peignoir*, the clinging, fascinating kind, and slip her number six feet into a number three satin slipper, and how the pit will rise at her as one man, as they have never done before, and take her to their hearts, for human nature is as yielding as putty to grief that wears nice clothes and is well scrubbed. Unfortunately the world is full of undramatic tragedies that are all the more tragic because of a dire need of soap and water.

As the educator of a public swayed by the eloquence of a slippper and moved to tears by the pathos of a petticoat, one can but beg and implore our dramatists, even at the risk of making their dramas less thrilling, to give virtue a tiny bit of a chance —for a change.

On Taking Oneself Seriously

NEVER has mediocrity been so triumphantly successful as now, and that is the reason we take ourselves so seriously. Never before has it attained such a high level of excellence, and if, for that reason, we miss those grand and lonely peaks that represent the supreme glory of the past, we can at least cheer ourselves by the comfortable reflection that we are each a glorious little peak. That being conceded it goes without saying that, occupied as we are with ourselves, we really have too much to do to bother about the greatness of our friends.

In the past the great man was surrounded by a band of ardent worshippers who circled about him and trumpeted forth his praise. In these degenerate days if there is a great man, he is not surrounded by satellites, for the satellites are practically employed circling about themselves. So the great man girds up his loins and wisely proclaims his own greatness.

Then, too, it is a bother to chant another man's praises if you are quite convinced, and you are probably right, that he is no greater than you are, so you abstain from the folly of it and devote all your energies to blowing your own little trumpet with seraphic vigour. In the past the little bands of ardent worshippers were quite disinterested, a merit to which the occasional ardent worshipper of the present cannot always lay claim. Our modern attitude is one of doubt, and so when we hear a pæan of praise we close one eye and ask "Why?" The fact is we decline to take anyone else seriously, but we make up for that by taking ourselves with redoubled seriousness. In previous ages there were no newspapers who took upon themselves the role of Fame, poising aloft a laurel wreath ready to drop it on the head of the best-advertised genius. In those blissful days, so little appreciated now, when the world could neither read nor write, hero worship was so popular that the lauded one found it unnecessary to take himself too seriously, for others kindly did it for him.

This is undoubtedly an age of emphasis

and capitals. If you don't see the capitals in print you are sure to see them in the attitude. Woman, Millionaire, Poet, Statesman, Composer, Dramatist, Novelist, Artist — to mention only a few — may not be spelled with a capital, but one never has the honour of meeting any of these worthy people without recognising the capital in their haughty intercourse with their fellow men.

Possibly it even permeates the lower strata of society, but one can only judge by the experience that comes in one's modest way. The gentlemen, who are at this moment shovelling in our winter coal, may take themselves seriously. Possibly the one with the coal-sack lightly twined across his shoulders has his own opinion as to the superior way in which he shovels the coal down the hole. It is more than probably that the plumber who came this morning to screw up a leaking tap takes himself seriously. I think he does for he left a small boy and his tools to remind me of him, and he has proudly retired from the scene. Still I really think that the disorder generally attacks those who work with what "the reverend

gentleman is pleased to call his mind," and it is most fatal where, besides dollars and cents, the sufferer demands the tribute of instant applause.

Supposing the greatest singer in the world were to sing to stolid faces and dead silence and were to receive no applause for two or three years; her attitude towards the public would become one of praise-worthy modesty. It is this frantic, ill-considered admiration which gives the good lady such a mistaken sense of her own importance.

If the last work of the last great mediocrity in the way of novelists were to be ignored, and only reviewed a couple of years after its publication, many an estimable gentleman and lady would step down from their pedestal and walk quite modestly on a level with their fellow beings.

If the poets received their meed of praise long after they were nicely buried instead of at afternoon teas, they would write better, indeed they would. Weak tea praise has never been good for the mental stamina, and it is awfully misleading. Because a gushing thing with an ardent eye protests

over a tea-cup that your poems are the most beautiful poems she has ever read, it is not necessary to believe her. Do not on the strength of that go home and snub your old mother who, to her sorrow, has been educated to believe that among her goslings she has hatched a swan. Gosling or swan in these days at best you can reach no higher altitude than to be called a minor poet.

One wonders who was the first reviewing misanthrope who called the modern singers "minor poets"? Why should that branch of the writing Art have evoked his particular animosity? Do we say minor historian, minor novelist, minor painter, minor composer? Why should we belittle an artist who may be infinitely greater than all these, and damn his art with an adjective? It is not for us to judge if a poet be minor or major. That is usually the business of the future, and there is no prophet among us able to prophesy which of our poets will join the immortals. Thank Heaven, advertising is only a temporary product, and has no influence on immortality.

The misfortune of our age is that the

tools for the divine arts have became so cheap and handy. Literature, especially, is at the mercy of every irresponsible infant with ambition and a penny to spare. Why, the snub-nosed board-school youngster down there skipping joyfully along the gutter has a sheet of paper and a lead-pencil, the excellence of which were beyond the imagination of Shakespeare. It is this cheap and fatal luxury which makes such triumphant mediocrity and so little greatness, and it is the fault of the newspapers, the publishers, too much education, and afternoon teas. May they all be forgiven!

The truth is the poets should not be published, nor should the newspapers be permitted to crown the singer with a laurel-wreath still dripping with printers' ink. The poet should be handed down as was old Homer and sung in the market place; if then in the future there is enough of him left to be considered at all, let him then be considered seriously, but let him not, O let him not, do it for himself prematurely, for fear. Remember the famous and classic tragedy of Humpty Dumpty who sat on a wall.

Once I came upon an editor — a great editor! — who in a moment of frenzy was sincere. I was looking respectfully at that tomb of fame, his wastepaper basket.

"Did you pass a fellow going down?" and he threw a scowl after the departed one. "That is Jones." He really didn't say Jones, but he mentioned a name so famous in literature that the tram-cars proclaim it along with the best brands of whiskies, soap, corsets, and sapolio, and it adorns sandwich men in the gutter by the dozens; hoardings bellow it forth silently, and the newspapers devote pages to it as if it were the greatest thing in patent medicine.

"I made him," and the editor thumped his sacred desk. "I boomed him and I printed his first confounded rot," and he strode up and down the room with a full head of steam on.

"I've always said it is the advertising that does it, not the stuff one advertises. Proved it, too, and then sat back and watched their heads swell. He is the last. A year ago he sat in that very chair and gurgled obsequious thanks. Last week we invited him to dinner and he forgot to come.

To-day he came in just to say if I don't pay him just double the rate I've been giving him he'll take his stuff to the "Rocket," for the "Rocket" editor has made him an offer. And this to me who boomed him and made him out of nothing. O, by Jove!"

"That is only the artistic temperament," I said soothingly.

"Artistic temperament! There is no such thing. It's only another name for d——d bad manners and a swelled head."

I was greatly interested in this artless definition of the artistic temperament, and I went off deeply pondering as to what constitutes a swelled head.

Now swelled head and taking yourself seriously are much the same, only that swelled heads are common in all grades of society. I once had a butcher who had it, being convinced that he was most beautiful to look upon. He used to put a great deal of his stock-in-trade on his curling brown locks. He was not a bit proud of the inside of his head, to do him justice, but he was so absolutely sure of the effect of his shiny hair, his big black moustache, his red cheeks and his round brown eyes.

He was a very happy man. Now you may take yourself seriously, but in a crevice of your mind you can still have the ghost of a doubt. But a swelled head never has a doubt. I have been told by those who have had an opportunity of studying, that swelled heads are not uncommon among shop-walkers, literary people, butlers and members of Parliament, and that musicians even are not all as great as they think they are. The last fiddler I had the joy of hearing scratched with so much temperament and so out of tune! What a mercy it is that so many people do not know a false note when they hear it!

It has even been whispered that some painters who paint very great pictures (in size) are really not so wonderful as they think they are. But if anyone is excusable for a too benevolent opinion of himself it is surely a painter who stands before an acre of canvas, and squeezes a thousand dear little tubes, and daubs away and has the result hung on the line. Then we go to the private view, turn our backs on it and say, "Isn't it sublime—did you ever!" Ah, me, it is no use being modest in this world!

Take yourself seriously, and clap on a swelled head and you will impress all such as have time to attend to you. Have we not come across the pretty third-rate actress who puts on the airs of the great, and refers to her wooden impersonations as "Art"? O art, art, what sins have been committed in thy name! Have we not met the pet of the papers, the celebrated lady novelist? How did she get her exalted position? Goodness knows! She sweeps through society with superb assurance, and she is really so rude at afternoon teas that that alone proves how great she is; she only relents when she meets editors and reviewers. She coos at them, and well she may for she is crowned with the laurel-wreath of the best up-to-date advertising.

Once I met a little politician who thought he was a statesman. A rare instance of course. Circumstances made me helpless, so to speak, and so he inflicted on me all the speeches he did not make in the "House." He gave me to understand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer consulted him on all intricate matters of finance; that he was in fact the power behind the throne.

Now the truth was, and he knew it, and I knew it, that his serious work consisted in paying those little tributes his constituency demanded, to subscribe bravely to drinking fountains, almshouses, and fairs — the kind with the merry-go-rounds — and, in his enlightened patriotism, to open bazaars, and also to dance for the good of his party. His supreme glory was to write M.P. after his name, which made him much sought after at innocent dinner-parties that aspired to shine with reflected glory. On such occasions he was often in great form and delivered extracts from those tremendous speeches he never made. But everybody was deeply impressed and it was rumoured in the suburbs that he would certainly be in the next Cabinet.

If you have a grain of humour you can't take yourself too seriously, for then you do realise how desperately unimportant you are. The very greatest are unimportant; what then about the little bits of ones who constitute the huge majority? Was there ever anyone in the world who was ever missed except by one or two, and that not because he was great or even necessary, but

only because he was beloved by some longing, aching heart? The waters of oblivion settle over a memory as quickly as over a puddle which is disturbed by a pebble thrown by a careless hand. Alas!

Perhaps the most tremendous instance of the unimportance of the greatest was Bismarck's discharge by his Emperor, with no more ceremony, indeed less, than a housewife employs to discharge her cook. The greatest man of his time, the creator of an empire, the inspirer of a nation! To whom in his very lifetime statues were erected, north, south, east and west. To whom the ardent hearts of the young went forth in adoration; whose possible death could only be reckoned on as a misfortune that would leave the country in chaos, when that iron hand should drop the reins. Then one memorable day he dropped the reins, not because death was greater than he, but simply because a young, untried man wished to do the driving himself. So he was discharged. What happened? Nothing. Since then who can believe in the importance of anyone? If the world can do perfectly well without such a giant, why

take yourselves so seriously, you little second-rate people who have written a little book that is dead as a door nail in three months, you little second-rate spouters of talk on the stage, forgotten as soon as the light is turned out, you little second-rate musicians with your long hair, your bad nerves and your greed for adulation! Why, there have been greater folks than all of you put together, and they have been forgotten as a summer breeze is forgotten. Then what about you? Why even shop-walkers, and butlers and parlour maids, though undoubtedly very important, should think of Bismarck and not be so dreadfully haughty!

Then, too, how many people think themselves great who are only lucky, vulgarly lucky. There is that solemn puffed-up one! Would he be so important if he had not married a rich wife who can pay the bills? And there is that other dull piece of prosperity who owes all his success to his pretty and clever wife who knows just how to wheedle good things out of the really great. And yet how seriously he takes himself! There is the lucky parson who

thinks he attracts such shoals of worshippers to God's house. Why it is not he at all, but a royal princess who has strayed in and whom the dear, unworldly sheep are following. Yet how seriously he takes his reverend self!

There is the great medical light, who, while curing an eminent personage of nothing in particular, interspersed a few racy anecdotes that made him roar. No wonder his waiting-room overflows, and that he is called in consultation all over the land. He is bound to be knighted. Why? Goodness knows.

There is the popular M. P. "I am the great I am," he all but says as he comes in. Once he was a modest man with modest friends, now he thinks he is a great man, and he wisely turns his back on his modest friends because he realises that he can serve his country best in the higher social circles. The first time I ever saw a real live M. P. was in America, and I held my breath I was so impressed.

We were even stirred by an Englishman who came over and who only aspired to be an M.P. He talked of nothing but himself

and his political views, and he used to point out the majesty of his own intellect. That was possibly the result of the American atmosphere; it is rather given to that! He is not yet an M.P., and over here he has lucid intervals of modesty. In a fit of humility a real M.P. once confessed to me that it would answer all practical purposes if he sent his footman to that magnificent building on the Thames, where the English legislator covers his gigantic intellect with that silk hat, which represents nothing if not perfect propriety.

One curious phase of taking ourselves so seriously is the enormous increased importance of the Interesting. Society bristles with the Interesting. Sometimes one wonders where the uninteresting go? Modern society demands that you should be something or do something or say something, or at least pretend to. You elbow your way through the other struggling mediocrities, and behold you arrive and that proves that you are interesting, whereupon you are invited to luncheon and dinner and things to meet the other Interestings. Now I ask, as one perplexed, are you ever invited to

meet the thoroughly uninteresting? And yet don't the uninteresting want to meet people and eat things? Of course they do, but the world does not want them at any price!

Is there, perhaps, a dreary corner of the earth where the uninteresting, one is not invited to meet, come together, and from this modest refuge wistfully watch the Interesting asked out to breakfast and other revels? But, really, have we the courage these days to invite anybody without asking an "interesting" person to meet them? Have we the moral courage to invite anyone to meet only — oneself? Of course a stray uninteresting may wander into the haunts of the other kind. One does sometimes meet a human being at a terribly intellectual afternoon tea or at a serious dinner party, whose conversation does not absolutely thrill one's pulses.

Fortunately the world's standard of what is interesting varies, or there would be an appalling monotony in its circles, but it is understood that you must be celebrated, or notorious, or well advertised or cheeky and even dishonest, if it is on a magnificent

scale. At any rate you must take yourself seriously and get a swelled head.

Each Interesting carries about with him his own barrel organ on which he grinds out his little tune, not always so great a tune as he honestly thinks, but still it is his very own. You may have all the virtues enumerated in the dictionary, but if you have not done something, or said something, or been something, and if you are only a well-meaning, law-abiding citizen and regularly pay your bills, a humdrum virtue which the hard-up Interesting occasionally ignores, then you had better give up and retire to the dull society to which you belong.

In studying the Interesting, one discovers that they do not always carry their credentials on the outside. Sometimes, it is humiliating to confess it, one nearly mistakes them for the other kind; still, it is always an honour to sit on the outskirts of a Great Mind, and humbly wonder in what forgotten corner genius has so triumphantly hidden itself. However, an uninteresting celebrity is quite a different affair from the uninteresting pure and simple, who are never

asked to meet anybody and certainly not to meals.

There was once, so we were taught at school, an age of stone and an age of iron. After much study I have decided that we have arrived at the age of Lions. Not the four-legged, dangerous kind, but the two-legged ones who drink tea and nibble biscuits. The analogy is even more solemnly striking for they both have enormous heads. The lion is evolved from the Interesting. First you have to be interesting, and then you must practise roaring, modestly at first, but not too modestly; then louder and louder until society simply can't ignore you, you make so much noise, and so you become a lion, and in these days it must be a very pleasant business to be a lion, the only drawback being that the supply rather exceeds the demand. However, no matter how excellent a thing is, there is sure to be some trifling drawback.

Even when you take yourself seriously the effect you produce if not irritating is often so delightfully funny! But one ought to be thankful for that, for the world owes a debt of gratitude even to the unconscious

humourist. It is so much easier to make people cry than to make them laugh! We are all little ready-made tragedians; do we not come into the world with a cry? I feel convinced that it is easier to write a great tragedy than a great comedy. Life's key-note is minor. We can turn on tears at short notice, but humour is not every man's province.

"Our customers," the courteous attendant of a circulating library said to me recently, "don't like funny books and so we don't stock them." Perhaps for this reason the discouraged humourist in search of amusement, seizes rejoicing on those refreshing people who take themselves seriously. It adds indeed the last epicurean touch to his delight that they don't know how awfully funny they are.

"Soft-Soap"

IT takes a great deal of heroism to tell an unpleasant truth, but it takes a great deal more of heroism to hear it. The privilege of telling an unpleasant truth is strictly confined to one's familiar friends, one's family, or one's enemies, which is probably the reason that no one is a hero to any of these, and that he sometimes likes his familiar friends and his family quite as much as he does his enemies. It is, after all, an exceptional person who has a great opinion of himself; even the most conceited has, I feel sure, his quarter hours when he sits in sackcloth and ashes and comtemplates his failures. No one rises superior to a compliment, and without such and other little amenities of life how the world's machinery would creak! I admire all those Spartan souls who declare that they love the truth, and it is humiliating to confess that I don't love the truth unless it is a pleasant one.

Everybody is, I do believe, his own best

critic, and there is hardly any thing unpleasant your family can tell you about yourself that you have not known long before; but it is an added humiliation to see yourself betrayed to the world. For example, it is the exception for the creator of any work which is in reality poor, but which the voice of the people acclaims (and the people are about the poorest critics going), if he does not realise down in his doubting heart, that his stuff is poor stuff. It is that which keeps the human balance, or some of our greatest ones, or rather our noisiest ones, would be inflated to the danger-point. There is a right standard in every heart, even if warped by circumstances, and the excuse, "He knew no better," hardly holds good out of a lunatic asylum.

It is always our humourists who have tackled truth, and who have shown with a laugh that touches perilously near a sob (a little way of humourists!) that a standard of pure unvarnished truth has never been popular in this erring world; at least not since some of out forefathers scalped their brother forefathers, and the ladies and

gentlemen who dwelt in caves took their afternoon tea in the shape of a cosy nibble at the bones of their foes. It is not the bones of our foes we nibble in these enlightened days!

It was an immortal humourist who, having discovered that truth is not what we want, — unless like a pill in sugar, — provided the world with a substitute — soft-soap. It is really soft-soap which makes social intercourse so delightfully easy, and we therefore owe our humorous benefactor a heavy debt of gratitude.

Nothing is, however, perfect, and if this blessed discovery has one little defect, it is that, like patent medicine, the more you swallow the more you want; so it occasionally happens that the great ones of this world have finally to have it administered in buckets where once they were grateful for only a sip.

The philosophic mind will discover that society can be quite simply divided into two classes, — one soft-soaps and the other permits itself to be soft-soaped. The humourist who invented the precious substitute for truth hardly realised the value of what

he did; for had he taken out a patent he would have rivalled in wealth the great Rockefeller himself, who has been so divinely blessed in that other oily article — petroleum.

When soft-soap was invented it was constructed out of the best materials of insincerity, surface enthusiasm, a touch sometimes of covert satire (or it would spoil), and just enough truth to mix the ingredients and make them digest. This is administered in all grades of society with the greatest success, and of it can be said, in the pathetic words of an American advertisement of a preparation of medicine not usually popular with childhood, castor-oil, "Even children cry for it."

Of the two classes, those who administer and those who swallow this pleasant mixture, it is needless to say that in the lower class are those who administer soft-soap. If in course of time the soft-soaper proves that he is possessed of transcendent abilities he graduates after hard, hard struggles, resigns his bucket, and proceeds to enjoy the superior privilege of being soft-soaped in turn; and the curious fact is that, after

having administered it so long, when he comes to taste it himself he does not recognise the familiar article at all. Of course there are some soft-soapers who never advance and never aspire.

As one strolls observingly through society, one discovers it is some people's mission in life to draw other people out. It is rare to find two persons talking together who give and take with equal facility, who contribute equally to the charm and brightness of the occasion. One of the two is sure to lead the other into those conversational oases where he loves to gambol — and very hard work it sometimes is!

Alas! the pioneers who soft-soap are usually women. You dear and uncomplaining sex, how hard you have to work to be called charming by that other sex that so greedily laps up the invention of the great humourist! From artisans of soft-soap you have indeed become artists. To you we owe those delightful multitudes of spoilt men who sulk or sniff or shoulder their pretentious way through society. Yes, your product! If society consisted only of men it would be quite sincere, even if rather brutal,

and as for soft-soap, it wouldn't exist. It would be interesting to know the sex of that historical serpent in the Garden of Eden!

A man, if he ever soft-soaps another man, does it for a definite object and hardly realises his own insincerity, but a woman — well, it is a woman's religion to make a man think her charming, and I am afraid — desperately afraid — that she does this most successfully when she makes him talk about himself. Women, poor things, are like the heathen: first they create an idol, sometimes out of very common clay it is to be feared, and then they proceed to worship it.

How often does a man turn over in his mind what subject of conversation the woman will talk about best with whom accident has thrown him, especially if she be plain and shy? Now, what about women, on the other hand? Why, a man must be a great idiot indeed if he does not find some woman to coo little nothings at him; to lead him tenderly out of narrow, monosyllabic paths into the glowing buttercup and dandelion fields of conversation where he can gambol joyfully. "I came

out strong, by Jove!" he congratulates himself proudly as they separate, and the goose never realises, as he supports himself against his usual wall and stares vacantly at the crowd, that the beguiling young thing, who smiled up at him like a rising sun, laboured with him with an energy which would have appalled a coal-heaver. Now, would a man fatigue himself as much to chatter with an empty-headed unattractive girl? Hand on heart, gentlemen, confess!

It was Thackeray who said that any woman not disfigured with a hump might marry any man. It is presumption to contradict the immortal master, but I don't believe it. Rather do I believe the words of wisdom of our old family cook. She finished a dissertation on matrimony with the following profound reflections: —

"Women ain't so particular as men. There ain't a man but'll find some woman to have him! If every woman could get a man there wouldn't be so many old maids. Down to our village there was a man who hadn't any arms or legs, but goodness me! even he got a wife. She came to call with him one day, and she'd fixed up a soap-box

on wheels and was drawing him along as comfy as you please, and she never made a cent out of him, for he wa'ant a freak. Now I'd just like to see a man up and do that for a woman, I guess! No, women ain't so particular."

Surely it holds good in society. If we don't drag around a gentleman without the usual complement of arms and legs, we more often than not support a gentleman without brains or manners, and we make him more insufferable than he naturally is by giving him a false valuation, in which he proceeds at once to believe, because, if there is one thing the stupidest man can do, it is, he can get conceited. Indeed the weaker sex has much to answer for, for she has created the twentieth century man, who would be a dear if only the women would leave him alone.

However, it is not only men women soft-soap — they soft-soap each other as well. The motives are twofold. Sometimes the wielder of the bucket has an axe to grind, or she likes to be popular at a cheap price. She always says something agreeable, and it is indeed a steel-clad heart that can resist.

How feel anything but friendly when a dear feminine gusher declares that you have the loveliest clothes, the most wonderful brains, the brightest eyes, the most agreeable husband, and the best cook in the world! The chances are that you hated her as she swam up and favoured your unyielding hand with cordial pumping; but she thought — no, she didn't think, the process is automatic, she merely dropped a penny in the slot of your evident antagonism on the chance of its possibly resulting in a cool invitation to call, a crush tea or a lunch: nothing is to be despised, for you never can tell!

When a woman decides to say something real nice she stops at nothing. She even sacrifices her nearest and dearest.

"How is that handsome, brilliant boy of yours?" a devoted mother asked me the other day. "How I wish my Jack were like him! But he's only just a dear, good, ordinary boy who'll never set the Thames on fire; well, we can't all be the mother of a genius!" Now, could one do anything else than invite that truly discriminating woman to lunch?

As I said before, it is some people's mis-

sion to draw others out. Some take everything hard, among other things, society. They hate to be among their kind, but they hate just as much the dignity of solitude; so they compromise matters by going about as dull and dreary as graven images, surrounded by a private atmosphere of frost. Then there are the adaptable ones who talk and laugh, while down in their souls they are bored to death. But never mind about being bored, the crime is to look bored. Adaptability is distinctly not an English national trait, rather is it American, the race made up of all races, and for this reason American society is, even if only on the surface, — and who in society ever gets below the surface? — more amusing than English society.

Oh, the heavenly rest and comfort when you pause exhausted after having pumped at a perfectly empty human being to find the process applied to yourself, and after all you *do* respond.

I was struck by it the other day when, in a roomful of English people who had been talked to and trotted out and made to show their best paces each in his own little field,

there came to the charming, but exhausted, hostess a Frenchman who proceeded to draw her out. The sweet restfulness of it! She had not to originate a single idea, and I am perfectly sure that every other man in the room was holding forth on some subject originated by the woman he was talking to; he was likely to talk till he had run down, and then she would have to wind him up with a new subject. If she didn't he would go away and leave her mortified and alone, and a woman can stand being bored, but she cannot stand looking deserted. A lovely woman told me all about it once.

"The reason I am so popular," she said frankly, "is because I flatter the men to the top of their bent. Vanity and love make the world go round, — vanity first and love a long way after. Nothing else.

"Tell a woman she is perfect and she doubts you — sometimes. But tell a man that (one can in all sorts of ways), why, he only thinks it is his due — possibly he will think you are clever. Most men are stupid — I don't mean their working brains, their bread-and-butter brains, but their society brains. They swallow anything you tell

them. They originate everything in this blessed world — but conversation.

"If a man converses he discourses and he improves your mind. Now you don't always want to have your mind improved! I don't say he doesn't know how to make love; but that doesn't count, for after all, making love is, often as not, silence *à deux*. So if he isn't improving your mind or making love he is stranded, and that is where we women come in.

"I don't want my mind improved at an afternoon tea, nor do I wish to be made love to over an uninspiring biscuit, and I should feel eternally disgraced if either of us looked bored; so I give him leading questions like sugar-plums, and while he nibbles away at each in turn till he has sucked it up, I have learnt to look at him with all my eyes — a kind of subdued rapture which I adjust according to the man, and then I detach my mind and consider what the clever stupid can talk about next.

" It isn't necessary to do anything but to smile, especially if you have nice teeth, as he does all the talking; but he'll think you are the cleverest woman going. Possibly

you are, only he doesn't really know how clever you are! There are some women you have to treat in the same way, and they are either very distinguished and spoilt or they are very influential, or they have missions; but it's always a bore, and unless you are 'on the make' — a very ill-bred expression, I think — it's tiresome and doesn't pay. I don't mind being bored for the sake of a man, but I really won't be bored for the sake of a woman.

"But, my dear, it is very fatiguing at best, and no wonder the women crowd into retreats and nervine asylums. It isn't the pace that kills, but the unearthly dulness. After I have talked to half a dozen men for whom I make conversation I go home to bed, and the vitality I have left wouldn't be enough for an able-bodied worm.

"Do I ever find a man who is interested in me if he is not in love with me? Never! If he is in love with me; yes! That's another story. Then everything about me interests him, but, perhaps, even then only because I am his temporary ideal. I daresay it's only another form of selfishness, bless him! The stupidity of men! That's

the reason they are so fatuous; they don't understand!

"Find me the man who isn't under the impression that some woman is hopelessly in love with him; and only because she has taken such pains to smile and coo at him, which she generally does to keep her hand in; any man is to her an instrument on which she, as an artist, finds it serviceable to play a few scales. To call men the ruling sex," — and my friend laughed till I saw every one of her beautiful teeth, — "they are the ruled sex, and they get married by the women who want them most."

She evidently agreed with Thackeray. I don't, as I explained before.

"My dear, how many an innocent young thing has said 'Yes' when 'he' has had no earthly intention of asking for anything — certainly not for her dear little hand.

"'May I?' was possibly all he said, but he looked three thrilling volumes. 'Yes,' she whispered innocently, 'but do first ask papa.' How can he explain to her that the question trembling on his lips was whether he should bring her a lemon-squash or a strawberry-ice. He asked papa and they

lived happily ever after, and it answered just as well. Now what I wonder is," she concluded, "which is the stupider — he or she?"

One hasn't time to soft-soap one's relatives. For its successful use there is required a certain exhilaration of spirits which familiarity does not encourage. It is more easy to be charming to one's acquaintances or intimate enemies than to the bosom of one's family. One can be kinder to one's own, but more charming to the outside world, alas!

"A woman doesn't go on for ever coquetting with her husband — it is a pity, but it's true. Perhaps if it were less true there would be fewer divorces. When, in the happy past, your husband was your lover and he looked at you with adoring eyes, why, then you could be charming, — at least for a few hours, because to be charming longer gets on one's nerves. Later, when you are married and he won't get up in the morning, and you say to him severely, "Samuel, are you never going to get up? It's nine o'clock, and cook says she'll give notice, for she can't and she won't live in such a

late family," and your Samuel grunts, turns over, and hurriedly takes forty more winks, how can you possibly be charming just then?

Nor can you murmur to your Samuel that he is the most interesting man you ever met, and that his brain is superior to all other brains. He doesn't care a rap what you think about his brains, and he'd much rather you wouldn't bother him but go downstairs; and so you do go downstairs in that very unbecoming frock of your pre-married days in which you wouldn't have had him see you for worlds. But now it has come again to the fore, ever since the time Samuel said pleasantly — he certainly has no talent for soft-soap — that after people have been married a year neither knows how the other looks. This from your Samuel, for whose sake you ran up an awful dressmaker's bill in other days. So you unearth your hideous frock with a desperate sigh.

But you always know how your Samuel looks, and when he wears an unbecoming necktie you grieve and nag and give him no peace. Perhaps it were well, after all, if a bit of soft-soap could be bottled up

during courting-time and labelled "To be used after marriage."

When men soft-soap men it is in devious ways. One of the most subtle, if you are a little man and you wish to flatter a great man, is to disagree with him. He is much impressed by your independence, and he is sorry for you too, because you own up to your awful presumption, and by inference you can soft-soap him up and down just as they whitewash a wooden fence. And he says he likes your independence, and he shakes hands with you and knows you the next time you meet, and calls you "My independent young friend," and invites you to luncheon. Now, had you agreed with every word he said you would have been only one of the usual job-lot of admirers, and he wouldn't have remembered you from Adam.

Of course you have to administer disagreement with great caution, because when a man reaches the highest eminence there is nothing that makes him so mad as contradiction. The first sign of real greatness shows itself when you decline to be contradicted. If, as it is stated, Lord Beacons-

field never contradicted his Queen, then did he well deserve her most loyal friendship. The bliss of never being contradicted! for that alone it is worth being a queen; but of course that is essentially a royal prerogative. It is said that there are people who by the exercise of this great negative gift have worked their way up from being quite modest members of society until they are now shining social lights.

Tell a man how great he is and will he come to tea? for there are crowds dying to meet him; why, of course he will come. Who has ever yet met a really celebrated recluse. One has heaps of recluses who professed to like solitude, but only in a crowd, but there was never one, however famous, who chose to exile himself in a desert island without the morning paper.

It is said of a famous poet, whose footsteps were much dogged by the enterprising tourist, that he complained bitterly and wrathfully of his inability to have even his own privacy; but that his bitterness and wrath were as nothing to what he felt when the blameless tripper was discovered to be paying no attention to him whatever. One

wonders if this innocent form of soft-soap is out of fashion, or are the poets less great? How many pious pilgrims wandered to the old Colonial house in Cambridge, America, where Longfellow lived, and looked with awe at his front windows. Did not pilgrims by the car-load go to Concord to catch a glimpse of the great Emerson, while they leaned reverently across the philosopher's white picket-fence?

The poets of the past were accustomed to this innocent worship; what about the poets of to-day? Do they also walk along the streets haughtily (like the illustrious Mr. and Mrs. Crummles) whilst admiring passers-by stop and say with bated breath, "This is the great Smith!" or is that involuntary form of flattery out of fashion, or haven't the new poets grown up yet?

Perhaps an ardent admirer might suggest Miss Marie Corelli as one to whom the twentieth century pilgrim makes pilgrimages; but that isn't fair, for how can any one distinguish her pilgrims from Shakespeare's pilgrims? Pilgrims are not labelled like trunks. One hardly ventures to say so, but it seems to me that in this Miss

Corelli has taken an unfair advantage of Shakespeare and the other poets.

There is nothing so democratic as true greatness, and this is a democratic age, and everybody exhibits to the public. We are either a great orator or we loop the loop, or we are a transcendent poet, or we walk from Cheapside to the Marble Arch on a wager. But do we do all these great things alone, unseen or unheard of by the world? No, we don't! Not a bit of it! It is not praise we want — we want more. We clamour for soft-soap; we demand it at the point of the bayonet.

It is an age of coarse effects, an age of advertisement. A poet could not conscientiously sing now about a rose left to bloom unseen, for excursion trains would be sure to be arranged there at reduced rates. It is a confidential age, and we demand a confidant as much as a matter of course as the heroine of the old-fashioned Italian opera, — in fact we demand the undivided attention of the whole world.

We sing our songs and listen greedily for the applause of the gallery; we meet with domestic misfortune, and we weep on the

bosom of the divorce court, and the daily papers weep with us. We do not do good by stealth, but rather in such a way that we get a baronetcy or a decoration; so when you see a man all tinkley with little stars and things, you will know that he is always a very great and charitable man indeed, and charity is not only alms bestowed on the poor. It is the beauty of charity that it is not bigoted.

We put our breaking hearts under a microscope and make "copy" out of them and money and notoriety, — and notoriety in these days pays much better than mere celebrity, and what therefore so fitting a tribute to notoriety as soft-soap? Ah me! it is enough to make the cat laugh! I really have never understood this curious fact in natural history, though I know how hard it is to make a cat laugh; this whole morning I spent trying to make Mr. Boxer laugh (Mr. Boxer being the purry commander-in-chief of our mouse-holes), and did not succeed.

Our modern world is a hippodrome, and we demand hippodrome effects and thunders of applause, because ordinary applause can-

not be heard. Watch the next painted face you see, and observe how familiarity with the process has coarsened it. Not that one has any objection to paint if it is well done. It is a woman's duty to look her best; and if paint makes her more beautiful, let her put it on — but, one does implore, not with the trowel.

The other night there was a great unbecoming function, but then all great functions are unbecoming by reason of the presence of woman's arch-enemy — electricity. It is quite certain that the first electrician was not only deplorably ignorant of the social virtues of soft-soap, but he was, besides, a jilted and misanthropic old bachelor who avenged his wrongs by harnessing electricity to a lamp, and cynically rejoiced when, for the first time, he turned its cruel light on the wrinkles, the hair-dye, and the dull jaded eyes of Society, and changed the pink of art into an unconvincing blue.

It was on that same occasion that I became deeply impressed by the tiara of Great Britain, which, it appears, is a National Institution, worn by the Aged instead

of caps, only caps are much more comfortable. I also discovered that it need have nothing in common with the rest of the toilet; at any rate one worthy lady so adorned had a little breakfast-shawl about her shoulders.

If it is true that the ladies of the United States have recently plucked up enough courage to adopt the tiara of Great Britain, and should any one perhaps insinuate that this is inconsistent with austere republican principles, a sufficient and crushing reply is that in America every woman is a "lady," and every "lady" is a queen.

To return to her of the tiara and the breakfast-shawl. One did wonder what illusion she laboured under when she fastened that diamond structure to the thin bandeaux of her faded hair, where it swayed insecurely. Did some one send the poor soul away from home and tell her she looked lovely, and as she trundled off in her brougham did fifty years slide temporarily from her old shoulders? After all, soft-soap has its virtues; it is just the thing for the aged!

What are illusions but soft-soap self-administered, and what would life be with-

out illusions? Show me the heroic soul who can look into a mirror and who sees what she really sees! O self-administered soft-soap! what does she really see?

Upon my word, I have come to the conclusion that a certain measure of soft-soap is not only a social necessity, it is more, it is a social duty; only one would like to offer a plea, just a little plea, for a fair division of labour! It is *so* hard always to say delightful things, especially if you don't mean them! It is being a thirsty Ganymede at the feast of the gods.

O, great humourist of soft-soap, you made two mistakes when you invented your wonderful lubricator of social intercourse; not only, like patent medicine, does the dose require to be constantly increased, but you forgot to insist on what is most vital — a periodic change of parts.

My plea is that the soft-soaped one should occasionally be obliged to step down from his pedestal and turn his own insincere admiration, his surface enthusiasm, and the countless and well-meant lies with which he helps to make the existence of the soft-soaped so pleasant, upon that unwearied

and energetic prevaricator, whose mission it is to praise, no matter how untruthfully.

Yes, even "little tin gods on wheels" should be made to step down from high Olympus and, in turn, serve their thirsting and patient Ganymede.

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